The SPORTS PINK
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Hants get set to take on champions

COUNTY CRICKET PREVIEW PAGES 40-43

OUTFOXED

Saints' poor form continues with 2-0 defeat at Leicester

GOAL: Riyad Mahrez's shot flies past Paulo Gazzaniga to open the scoring at Leicester

LEICESTER 2
SAINTS 0

SAINTS' poor run of away form continued as they were soundly beaten 2-0 by Leicester at the King Power Stadium.

An awful first half display cost Ronald Koeman's side as they suffered defeat at the hands of another relegation threatened team.

It is now just one point from the last possible 18 away from home and a great season now has just four wins in the last 15 matches in all competitions.

A brace from Riyad Mahrez did the damage on this occasion, with the main positive for the day being that Saints remained just a point behind Tottenham in sixth place by virtue of Mauricio Pochettino's men falling to a 3-0 beating at Stoke.

● Continued on pages 2-3

TERRY PAINE

Saints legend's team of season
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Fan-tastic day for supporters
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The promotion celebrations
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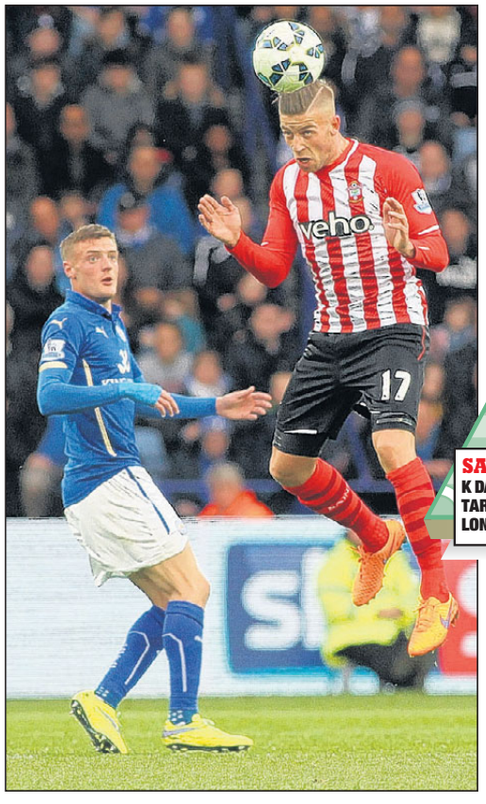
£36,000 TO BE WON IN FIND THE BALL – SEE PAGE 10

Saints Spotlight

MATCH ACTION: Leicester v Saints



USING HIS HEAD: Toby Alderweireld

LEICESTER 2 SAINTS 0: TWO GAMES LEFT

SAINTS PAY FIRST HALF

Adam Leitch

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CHIEF SPORTS REPORTER

FROM FRONT PAGE

There was an absolutely electric atmosphere at the King Power Stadium and the crowd were buzzing even more when Robert Huth met Marc Albrighton's near post corner but he headed a tough chance over the bar.

They almost raised the roof as Leicester took the lead on seven minutes.

It was not a great one from a Saints point of view as it came from a right wing throw-in in which the Foxes won the second ball.

Riyad Mahrez was allowed to cut across goal far too easily when he could have been stopped and hit a left footed shot from just outside the area that went into the bottom corner with Paulo Gazzaniga diving full length to his left but unable to keep it out.

Their enthusiasm was temporarily dampened though as a lengthy stoppage in play ended with Matty James stretchered off to be replaced by Danny Drinkwater after sustaining an injury in an innocuous looking race for the ball with Ryan Bertrand.

Things got worse for Saints on 19 minutes as they went 2-0 behind.

It was a horrible moment for Gazzaniga on his return to the team as he sliced an attempted clearance up in the air.

The Saints defence were caught on their heels and Jamie Vardy got into the area down the left and crossed to a total untracked Mahrez who was alone in the six yard box aside from Gazzaniga who could only get the slightest deflection to his stab home.

Harrison Reed tried to get an immediate response for Saints but his drive from distance was punched clear by Kasper Schmeichel.

They had a clearer cut chance on 25 minutes as Steven Davis headed into the six yard box and picked out Sadio Mane but his header was poor and well over the bar.

Gazzaniga was forced into a good save to stop Saints falling even further behind ten minutes later.

Mahrez played a nice reverse pass into area and the path of Vardy who had the beating of Toby Alderweireld but the Saints stopper spread himself well to stop the shot with his legs.

Leicester continued to threaten as Leonardo Ulloa managed to muscle his way in between three Saints defenders to meet Esteban Cambiasso's flighted delivery from the left but he headed over.

Saints nearly got back into the game in first half stoppage time as Alderweireld flighted a free kick from 25 yards over the wall but it was fairly central and Schmeichel was able to turn it over the bar.

Interestingly Koeman decided not to make any personnel changes at the break, though he did tinker with the formation slightly with Victor Wanyama sat behind Reed and Steven Davis and then a three man attack with Eljero Elia and Mane either side of Graziano Pelle.

Elia tired his luck from distance four minutes after the restart but fired well wide.

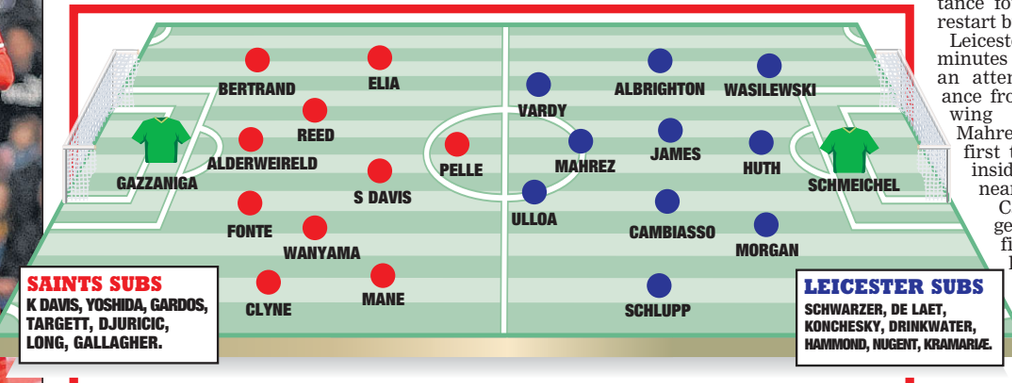
Leicester came close on 58 minutes as Wanyama steered an attempted headed clearance from Albrighton's right wing cross straight to Mahrez but he dragged his first time volley from just inside the area wide of the near post.

Cambiasso managed to get an effort on target five minutes later but he was off balance in the area and it was a comfortable save for Gazzaniga.

Saints were performing a bit better in the second period but still posed little forward threat with Leicester not attacking with the vigour of their first half display as they made themselves hard to break down to defend their lead.

Saints made a double change on 66 minutes to try and change things around with Filip Djuricic and Shane Long coming on for Steven Davis and Elia.

Leicester responded with



SAINTS SUBS
K DAVIS, YOSHIDA, GARDOS, TARGETT, DJURICIC, LONG, GALLAGHER.

LEICESTER SUBS
SCHWARZER, DE LAET, KONCHESKY, DRINKWATER, HAMMOND, NUGENT, KRAMARIÆ.

TEAM NEWS

Kelvin Davis will have to wait until the final day of the season to make his 300th Saints appearance as he was dropped in favour of Paulo Gazzaniga.

Ronald Koeman confirmed that Gazzaniga will also play against Aston Villa so the manager can assess him with Fraser Forster injured for the start of next season, but Kelvin Davis will be back for his milestone appearance on the final day of the campaign.

Toby Alderweireld was brought back into the centre of defence with Harrison Reed coming into a holding midfield role and Maya Yoshida moving to the bench.

In the attacking midfield roles there were two further changes with Steven Davis and Sadio Mane replacing Shane Long and the suspended James Ward-Prowse. Sam Gallagher was back on the bench.

FOLLOW SAINTS EVERY DAY IN THE DAILY ECHO

Saints Spotlight

TO OVERHAUL SPURS AND ENSURE EUROPEAN FOOTBALL

COST OF DISPLAY

FLYING TACKLE: Sadio Mane battles for the ball.

David Nugent replacing Vardy.

Mane threatened to get Saints right back into the match with a lofted shot from 20 yards out but it was down the middle and a backpedalling Schmeichel was able to turn the ball over the bar.

Up the other end just moments later it could have been all over as Albrighton worked the ball in from the right to Cambiasso but his shot from 12 yards out hit the side netting.

Leicester made a final change to shore things up on 77 minutes with former Saint Dean Hammond coming on for Ulloa.

Marcin Wasilewski picked up the first booking of the game for a foul on Mane.

The defender headed over the bar when picked out by a corner with three minutes remaining.

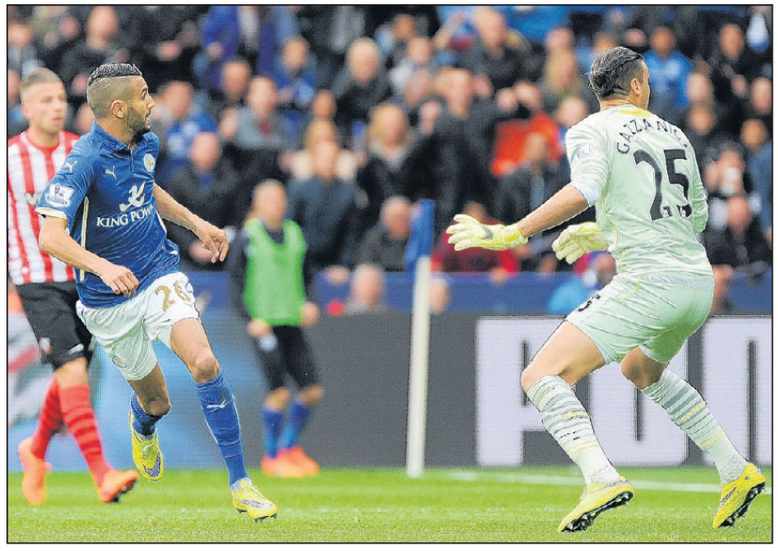
Despite the fact they had struggled to get much going you never felt Saints were out of the game as you sensed that one goal would make Leicester nervous and give them a chance to get back into the game.

However, as the fourth official held up the board to show four minutes of stoppage time there was no more sign of a goal coming than there had been at any stage previously.

Alderweireld tried to make something happen with a shot from 25 yards but it cannoned off of a Leicester defender and wide.

Mane got on the ball in the Leicester area moments later but flashed a shot across goal and wide.

That proved to be the last chance of the match and the final whistle confirmed another disappointing away day defeat for Saints and just two games left to overtake Spurs and finish in sixth for guaranteed Europa League football.



ON TARGET: Riyad Mahrez scores his second

THWARTED: Toby Alderweireld and Jose Fonte foil Jamie Vardy's attack

SCRAMBLE: Goalmouth action at the wrong end for Saints

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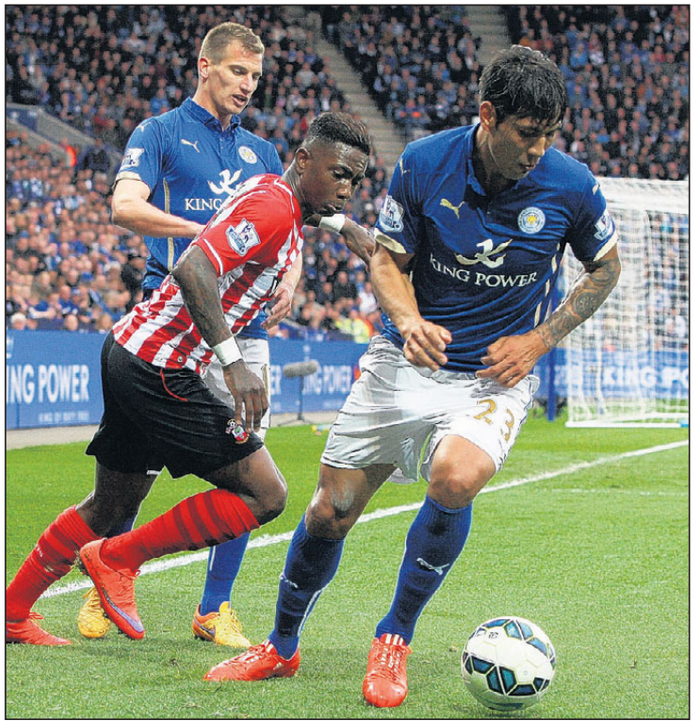
Saints Spotlight



KOEMAN LEFT TO RUE SLOW START

RONALD Koeman was left to rue another slow start from his team as Saints' poor run of form continued with defeat at Leicester.

After last weekend's performance at Sunderland there was much optimism around the Saints camp that they would bounce back to life at the King Power Stadium.

However, that was certainly not the case as they started poorly, quickly fell 2-0 down and never recovered against a Leicester side that then had a lead to defend.

Koeman admitted that he was disappointed and surprised by the start his side made to the game.

"Yes, you expect a reaction of the team after last week and again problems in the beginning of the game," he said.

"We lacked some sharpness, strange after last week, and, ok, you see Leicester plays full of confidence, aggressive and two chances,

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two goals, and that makes it more difficult.

"That's the reason why we lost. It's all about sharpness to start the game.

"After the 2-0 we tried, we play, but we didn't create a lot about all our ball possession.

"We did some changes in the second half, play a little bit different with three at the back, but they are defending well, good organisation, strong physically and a difficult afternoon."

Koeman also confirmed he wanted to play Paulo Gazzaniga rather than Kelvin Davis so he could assess the need for a new goalkeeper in the summer, with Fraser Forster set to miss much of next season with his knee injury.

He did also confirm that Davis would return to make his 300th appearance for the club at Manchester City on the final day of the season.

"We spoke to Kelvin and we spoke to Paulo. It's all about the situation we have for the next season about Fraser Forster," said Koeman.

"He will be out for a long time. Still we know not until when.

"We have to make decisions about that.

"To make really the good decisions I like to see Paulo playing – not playing with the under-21s, not training every day with group, but playing two games, this and next week.

"Of course, I know that Kelvin is away with one game to play 300 games for Southampton and Kelvin will play the last one against Manchester City.

"Paulo will play next week again to make up our minds for next season and that's the reason and nothing else."

RUEFUL: Ronald Koeman at Leicester today

MORE MATCH NEWS AND REACTION IN MONDAY'S DAILY ECHO

Premiership Spotlight

VITAL STRIKE: Jermain Defoe (left) celebrates scoring Sunderland's second goal with his team-mates.

SUNDERLAND head coach Dick Advocaat admits his side's 2-0 win at Everton was lucky but not undeserved as the Black Cats edged closer to Premier League survival.

Their first goal from Danny Graham – his first in his 28-month spell at the club - had a huge slice of fortune as the striker deflected Jordi Gomez's shot, and when Toffees midfielder James McCarthy's shot beat goalkeeper Costel Pantilimon but rebounded off the post there was a feeling it was to be their day.

Jermain Defoe then diverted home Adam Johnson's deflected shot for another messy goal – but what was important was a win which lifted the side to 36 points, with fellow strugglers Leicester to visit the Stadium of Light next weekend.

"We were lucky today. At some moments they outplayed us but our back five including the goalkeeper did really well," said the Dutchman.

"Some other players played well last week but they had more problems with Everton, but at the end of the day we got three points and I try to forget the nature of things.

"It was not a great game by our side but at the other end it was very effective and that is what counts.

"It is not only luck, they worked very hard. The defence stood behind us and if you have the commitment to give everything even against a better team, you can get results."

Advocaat once more selected three up front, with Defoe and Connor Wickham either side of Graham, and it paid off again.

"I like that. I think if we play three up front the defence line from the other side has to be careful as well," he added.

"I told our players 'You are three well-known players, show it today, make them a little bit nervous'.

"We didn't create a lot but they know if someone is open then you can do it."

Sunderland have taken 10 points from the six matches Advocaat has been in charge but he admits the relegation battle is not something he particularly enjoys.

"I still enjoy it the other way (challenging at the top end of the table), if you don't mind," he added.

"I just came to this club seven weeks ago. The club took a risk as well and hopefully we will do the job properly and we can be happy at the end (of the season)."

Everton had scored in their previous seven league matches but a first home defeat of 2015 was frustrating for manager Roberto Martinez.

"You have to score goals. I would have been very disappointed if we had not found the way to have an attacking threat or it had been a pedestrian game," he said.

"I don't think today has been that case but we cannot be happy with what happened in the 18-yard box.

"I don't think we were sharp enough. We had 22 attempts, 15 corners, 75 per cent possession.

"The technical aspect of the performance was very good and I thought we opened Sunderland up in many occasions.

"Today everything that could have gone against us in our box did - like a deflected shot the first time they got anywhere near our 18-yard box.

"The two goals are very unfortunate, the second John Stones gets impeded by Steven Fletcher."

Burnley down despite win

BURNLEY are relegated after just one season in the Barclays Premier League - and they may just drag Hull down with them after a 1-0 win at the KC Stadium.

Danny Ings' 10th goal of the season - Burnley's first in more than 10 hours - earned them a fifth successive away win over the Tigers but it was not enough to save them from the drop after Sunderland and Leicester secured victories and Newcastle claimed a precious point.

It was Burnley's first win since March but they are seven points from safety with just two matches left and Ings admitted they have paid the price for their recent goal drought.

"The lads were unbelievable today," Ings told Sky Sports. "The fight in the team was phenomenal from start to finish. I thought we were the stronger team and played some great stuff but it's come a little too late.

"Obviously the goals dried up towards the end of the season but the lads are fighting until the end and I'm extremely proud of them."

Ings scored after a rebound on 62 minutes and Ashley Barnes almost doubled the lead only to have his goal disallowed for a foul on Steve Harper, while Robbie Brady was twice denied by the crossbar as Hull battled to the end.

The Tigers, who have still never won a Premier League game in May and have failed to score in 15 of their last 28 matches, dropped into the relegation zone and look set join Burnley in the Championship with games against Tottenham and Manchester United to come.

Burnley's win meant QPR drop to the bottom of the table and they will also be relegated if they fail to win at Manchester City.

Ayoze Perez ended Newcastle's eight-game losing streak as they picked up their first league point since February in a 1-1 draw with West Brom at St James' Park.

The Magpies had briefly slipped into the bottom three when Victor Anichebe headed home Craig Gardner's 32nd-minute free-kick, but Perez levelled four minutes before the break with a sweetly-struck shot to hand head coach John Carver a little respite.

Tom Cleverley handed Aston Villa a massive survival boost as they hung on to beat West Ham 1-0 and held onto 14th place in the table.

The midfielder scored his third goal in three games to move Villa four points clear of the drop zone.

DEFENSIVE LAPSE: Stoke City's Charlie Adams (second left) scores their first goal during the match

Spurs left red-faced by Stoke

TOTTENHAM'S Champions League hopes were extinguished in the most embarrassing fashion as they suffered their heaviest defeat to Stoke in 80 years.

Charlie Adam rammed the abuse he received from the travelling fans right back down their throats with a close range header and Steven Nzonzi made it 2-0 before Vlad Chiriches was sent off for a second yellow card.

And Mame Diouf rounded off the very one-sided 3-0 hammering late on.

Tottenham manager Mauricio Pochettino will not be looking forward to watching replays of the three goals his team gave away.

They all came as a result of defensive lapses.

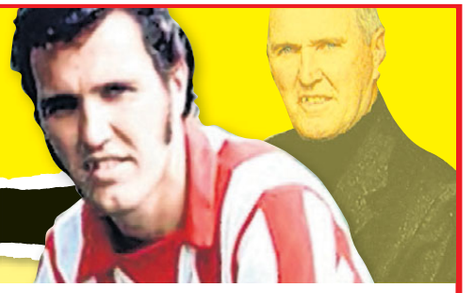
Jan Vertonghen nodded the ball right into Adam's path for his goal and a mix-up between Hugo Lloris and Eric Dier meant Nzonzi had the easiest of finishes to round off the win, which means Stoke have equalled last year's total of 50 points with two matches left.

That Stoke are just eight points behind Spurs shows how much the Londoners' form has tailed off towards the end of a long and tiring season. They were simply dreadful at the Britannia Stadium – they were shaky at the back and lacked invention in attack.

They are now mathematically out of the race for the Champions League and a fifth successive season in the Europa League beckons.

Paine's World

The Saints legend's EXCLUSIVE column on all things football



TERRY PAINE'S PREMIER LEAGUE XI 2014/15

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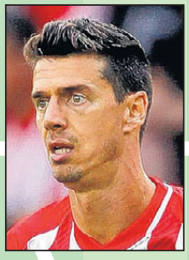
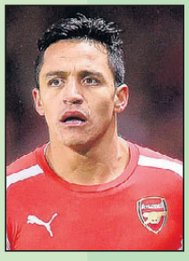
NATHANIEL CLYNE



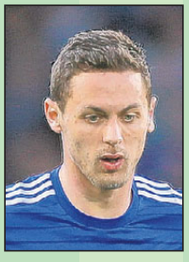
JOSE FONTE

JOHN TERRY

RYAN BERTRAND

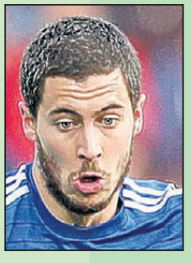


ALEXIS SANCHEZ



NEMANJA MATIC

MORGAN SCHNEIDERLIN



EDEN HAZARD

DIEGO COSTA

SERGIO AGUERO

Saints quartet in my top team

CHELSEA may have dominated the Premier League this term, but I had no hesitation in picking four Saints players in my team of the season.

Both individually, and collectively as a team, there have been some outstanding performances at St Mary's during the campaign.

I have included Nathaniel Clyne, Jose Fonte, Ryan Bertrand and Morgan Schneiderlin in my side, while also picking Ronald Koeman, below, as my manager of the year.

The rest of the team is largely made up of players from this season's best side – Chelsea.

Jose Mourinho has claimed any celebrations on winning the Premier League will be over in a flash, and already his mind will be focusing on the future, just as it did last year when, while others were dithering and waiting for the World Cup to finish, he had finalised his signings before a ball had been kicked in Brazil.

Some had suggested that the acquisition of both Diego Costa and Cesc Fabregas had cemented the title before the whistle blew in August for the start of the new season.

Mourinho certainly had a squad of players with plenty of depth at his disposal and, if you look at its average age, it comes out at a healthy 26.9, with most of their key players still approaching their prime.

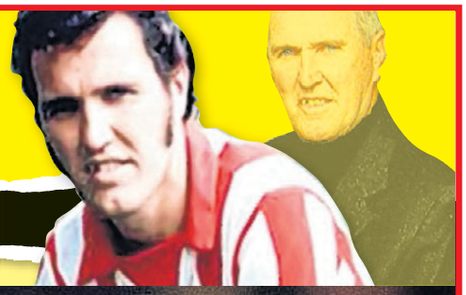
No doubt players will be added to the current team again this summer, and I imagine I will again be picking a healthy Blues representation in my XI this time next year.

Although the PFA Awards have been announced, I believe they are always slightly premature and are made with possibly the most important part of the season still to go, therefore my selections are based on the full campaign.

FOOTBALL RESULTS AND LATEST STANDINGS – SEE BACK PAGE

Paine's World

The Saints legend's EXCLUSIVE column on all things football



The man to Bale out United

FOR any football fan who followed or played the game before vast swathes of money began to flood into it, it would have seemed inconceivable that a player would one day command the astronomical sum of £100m.

£100m? The figure itself seems better suited to describing a small country's GDP, as opposed to the value of a single Welshman – Gareth Bale – on a football pitch.

It seems illogical that European champions Real Madrid would demand a fee superior to the world-record-breaking sum of £87m they coughed up two summers ago for a player they apparently now want to get rid of.

It seems improbable that two separate institutions could spend a combined £187m on the same person, for his ability to kick around a ball, in the space of two years.

For pretty much any other club in world football, I'd advise their money would be better spent elsewhere, spread more evenly across a diverse array of transfer targets, but for a Manchester United team in desperate need of everything the 25-year-old offers, he might just be worth that ridiculous nine-figure fee.

Bale has always struck me as a Manchester United player – a winger/forward of imperious pace, power, industry and netting prowess, with enough technical quality to rightfully succeed the likes of Ryan Giggs, David Beckham and Cristiano Ronaldo on the Red Devils' flanks.

He would have thrived under the clinical counter-attacking football of scintillating velocity that defined United under Sir Alex Ferguson, and become the biggest benefactor of Paul Scholes' driving through balls into the final third.

But, now, the Red Devils need Bale's eclectic mix of talents more than ever.

They are a few superstars short of a title-winning side, and a penetrative threat that can be depended upon for goals has been absent from their forward line for much of the season – particularly since Angel Di Maria's early superlative form turned surprisingly sour.

Wayne Rooney's under-appreciated pace is a running cliché and Ashley Young has performed considerably better than expected when called upon.

But, overall, United have been static up front this year – dependent more on the aerial dominance on Marouane Fellaini to punch holes going forward – and, with the exception of Angel Di Maria's deft lob against Leicester City, we're yet to see them roar up the pitch in the manner of old.

In fact, they've scored just two counter-attacking goals this season – five less than the Premier League's best in that regard, Manchester City.

Louis van Gaal has attempted to take the team in a new direction this season – his much-discussed philosophy of ball retention, juxtaposed by long, angled passes.

But physically demanding counter-attacking is an integral part of the Premier League and there are few attackers in world football who suit that basketball-paced style better than Bale.

Not that he is all about the counter-attack, although his capacity to convert wide-open spaces into goals was the catalyst for his £87million move to the Bernabeu, after netting 26 times during his coming-of-age campaign at Tottenham Hotspur.

Since joining Real Madrid, he's succumbed to La Liga demands by improving his ability in tight spaces, with deft flick-ons, nutmegs, tidy one-twos and reverse passes aplenty.

And more than counter-attacking itself, it's the manner in which the winger has refined his abilities so perfectly for Premier League football – his athleticism, his ability to produce stunning technique while moving at incredible speed, his overall workrate and original tutoring as a defender – that would make him such a valuable asset for a United side seemingly moving away from English ideals.

But, perhaps most importantly of all, United need a bold statement this summer – a declaration they are a part of the European elite once again.

It will take a lot to shake Chelsea's confidence of retaining the title, and Arsenal are rather chuffed with themselves amid a purple end to an otherwise ordinary 2014/15 campaign, but Bale is the kind of signing – and £100m is the type of transfer fee – that can psychologically shift the balance of power back into United's favour.

Should a combination of the above events secure United's first Premier League title since Ferguson's resignation, then Real Madrid's £100m man will be worth every penny.

The longer they go without the English crown in the legendary Scot's absence, the harder it will become.

LEICESTER v SAINTS NOSTALGIA – SEE PAGES 20-21

FAIRYTALE BUILT ON DEBT

BEAUTIFUL SOUTH
BY DAREN WHEELER

"MONEY talks, but it don't sing and dance and it don't walk."

Those were the words once sang by Neil Diamond.

In the world of football, it certainly doesn't sing or dance but it obviously can play football.

Last week I waxed lyrical about the rise of AFC Bournemouth and their promotion to the Premier League.

A dramatic final day in the Championship then saw Watford slip up at the last minute and Bournemouth snatch the title.

It was a fairytale, it was the stuff of footballing legend.

It was all just wonderful.

Until the bill arrived..

Come the next week it was announced that the club had made a staggering loss.

According to Bournemouth's 2013-14 accounts, Maxim Demin had pumped around £25million into the club in the form of two loans.

This season in the Championship saw Bournemouth suffer losses of more than £10million with staff costs of £17.3m and a debt of £21.5m.

Not quite the fairytale then.

If any story over the last few years exemplified where football is going wrong, then it's that preceding paragraph.

A club that has a ground with a capacity of just 12,000 has made a loss of £10 million before they even kick a ball in the Premier League.

It reminds me of a time five years ago when I wrote about the impending demise of Portsmouth FC.

I was roundly laughed at by the sad blue few.

I'd pointed out that three of Pompey's players wages were the equivalent of a season's income via the turnstile.

I said their current spending was just not viable, that a club that couldn't exist without Sky money was one that was destined to fail.

I couldn't have predicted just how quickly Pompey dropped down the leagues, but it was well deserved.

They won games with money they didn't have and their fall from grace shattered the local economy and left local businesses and tax payers millions of pounds out of pocket.

So don't tell me football isn't a matter of life and death.

When your business fails because its owed money from football or local services are cut because the tax man is owed money by football, then football matters.

Southampton have defied all the odds.

The very fact that we are still competing for a European place is a minor miracle.

But with Bournemouth £10 million in debt just to get promoted, you wonder just what Saints would need to do to move on, to get into the Champions League.

Every part of my body wants Saints to play in Europe.

CHAMPIONS: Harry Arter scores as Cherries beat Charlton 3-0 to be crowned Championship champions last weekend.

If fans of Tottenham tell you the Europa League is waste of time and sidetracks clubs from bigger things, then they're idiots.

Football isn't about ticks in the plus column.

It's about glory, it's about the moment, the euphoria, the feeling you get when the ball hits the back of the net, when the final whistle blows.

But, above all, it's about doing it in an ethical, responsible and debt-free way.

Bournemouth may make a wonderful story but it's somewhat tarnished when you look at how much in debt they got to just achieve promotion.

That bill will rise dramatically when they look to stay in the Premier League.

All of this built on a club with a capacity of 12,000.

You don't have to be a financial genius to see this just doesn't add up.

So what is the answer?

Capping clubs based on income isn't the answer. It just means that the clubs that have the money now will continue to rule the roost.

To compete, you'd have to spend enormous amounts of money to even begin to compete.

If you have a big ground and decent income, you're laughing. If not, you face a long journey to an even plateau.

Surely the only answer is a wage cap.

No player to earn over £100,000 a week and a cap on signing on bonuses. Make footballers chose their club based on something other than a huge wage packet.

For arguments sake, you're a decent footballer, what do you do?

Unless you chose one of three clubs, you're not going to win a championship winners medal.

Unless you chose one of ten clubs, you're unlikely to win a cup winners medal either.

The amount of clubs outside the elite that have won the FA cup is depressingly low. Only Wigan and Portsmouth have done it and their fall from grace since winning it has been astonishing.

You'd be tempted to ask, what is the point of it all?

Chances are you won't see your club win the title.

Chances are you won't see your club win a trophy.

Chances are the best you can ever hope for is the occasional memorable win. Why do you bother?

You bother because football is the most electrifying sport in the world.

Because nothing makes your blood pump and your heart beat faster than a live game.

Nothing can lift you up and kick you down like your football club.

It makes your heart and it breaks your heart.

In equal measure.

Congratulations AFC Bournemouth, but remember the time we beat you to promotion in League 1 and you accused us of "buying success."

It looks as if your wallet's already out, and the spending has only just begun …

SAINTS SEASON 2014/15 STATISTICS – SEE PAGE 11

Adam Rant

This week's big talking points with **Adam Leitch**

Fight of the century is a damp squib

AFTER all the hype and excitement, Floyd Mayweather's victory over Manny Pacquiao was a depressing evening.

Adam Rant couldn't help but think back to the words on this very page last week that suggested we could come away from the bout wondering what might have happened had the boxers faced each other in their prime.

Mayweather probably would have still found a way to win, such is his speed and defence, but Pacquiao would have had a far greater chance than he did on the night.

For all the talk of a shoulder injury and whether it was reported or not, the real losers here were boxing public rather than the fighters who both got handsomely rewarded for their efforts.

A lot of people spent a lot of money on watching this fight, and it was barely even a contest. We actually learned nothing new about either man.

There is now talk of Mayweather facing Amir Khan. The Brit would have his work cut out, but at least would prove a far more live opponent for Mayweather than Pacquiao did.

It is just a shame that history will not remember this as the defining fight of a generation, more an afterthought that proved a total damp squib.

ONE-WAY TRAFFIC: Floyd Mayweather Jr, left, dominated against Manny Pacquiao.

The Special Won

THE very best managers have a way of just finding a way to get their teams to win.

It's not always about having the greatest side, a classic team who are remembered throughout history as one of the greats.

Instead, it's just about getting those medals and trophies in the cabinet.

Like him or loathe him, Jose Mourinho, pictured, will go down as one of the best ever at doing just that.

In the same way as Alex Ferguson had a way of putting a side together to find results, Mourinho has that same stardust.

Take a look at Ferguson's last Manchester United team and you see a side that were a very pale imitation of many of his previous sides from down the years at Old Trafford. Even a few years on it's hard to remember who was even in that team.

Yet somehow or another it proved enough to get across the finishing line and win the Premier League.

Mourinho has done something vaguely similar with Chelsea.

This is not a classic Chelsea side by any stretch of the imagination.

Of course they are good, you do not win as many games as they have this season without being a decent side, but this is far from a great team.

Like the Ferguson side, in five years' time you will probably struggle to remember who was in the team, but they got the job done.

Mourinho's magic comes from his ability to harness what he has got.

Many managers bemoan what they don't have, he just gets on with it.

Mourinho is a master of organising teams and defences. This Chelsea side is a very defensive team, they are not particularly enjoyable to watch, but they don't concede many goals, and that makes them very hard to beat when you consider they do have plenty of quality up top.

In so many games it has been a case of just about edging out victories to put another three points on the board.

Mourinho does have talent to work with, but he looked at what he had when he came in and realised he needed a massive change.

But that cannot happen overnight, and in the meantime his job, given the significance of the club he is at, is to find a way to win things.

You can expect the Chelsea of next season to be more entertaining to watch, to be an overall better side. That is the luxury of having time and transfer windows to tinker with things as you go along.

The marvel of Mourinho though is what he can achieve in the intervening period.

Whereas many managers simply cannot handle gradual reform, he has a way of making it seem so simple. Ferguson was the same.

It's what makes him so special.

England failings laid bare

AS IF things could get much worse with the England cricket team they somehow conspired to only draw a series with a less than exceptional West Indies team.

There are so many questions to be answered now, and it calls into question once more the role of coach Peter Moores.

The problems may be more deep rooted than that, but why on earth was Adil Rashid not given a game?

He is potentially a fantastic spin bowler at international level and instead we saw, what we can kindly describe, as a mediocre England spin attack.

Jonathan Trott's return to the team has been a bit of a shambles.

Trott scored a lot of runs in his first spell with the team, but when he left the England camp last time that was surely time to call an end to proceedings and actually try to move on, something England are traditionally not good at – the only person they seem able to do that with is Kevin Pietersen, who ironically is somebody who would actually strengthen the team. Instead Trott has come back and now gone again.

James Anderson must be thinking he pretty much needs to bowl from both ends at the moment if England are going to be taking wickets.

Underlying all this is a structural issue with the game that incoming ECB chairman Colin Graves needs to get a grip of.

He seems like the kind of guy who isn't afraid to make sweeping changes where they are necessary, and he will certainly have to do exactly that if he is to turn things in a positive direction.

It will mean upsetting some of the cricket establishment, but they are the ones whose system has led us to this.

SOUTHERN Daily Echo

FIND THE BALL

THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT £36,000

or £1,000 nearest miss prize...

PLUS 70 consolation prizes of £15 each week

20 for Southern Daily Echo
20 for Daily Echo Bournemouth
10 for Dorset Echo
10 for Sunday Independent
10 for Brighton Argus

FIND THE BALL is a test of skill and football knowledge and is open to readers of the Southampton, Bournemouth, Dorset Echos, Brighton Argus and Sunday Independent, Plymouth.

You have to use your skill and judgement to determine the exact centre of the ball.

Mark an X with a ballpoint pen on the picture where you consider that position to be – clear rubber stamps and self adhesive labels will also be accepted.

Every coupon will be carefully examined and the jackpot prize will be paid to the entrant whose cross marks the exact centre of the ball when the photograph was taken.

If the Jackpot is not won, £1,000 will be added to next week's jackpot.

The nearest-miss prize of £1,000 will be paid out each week to the competitor whose cross is nearest to the centre of the ball when there is no jackpot winner.

When a jackpot has been won the next week's prize reverts back to £5,000 and the nearest-miss prize stays at £1,000.

If the Jackpot is not won after 46 weeks, when standing at £50,000, the nearest miss prize of £1,000 will be paid out and the jackpot will remain at £50,000 each week until there is a jackpot winner, then the jackpot starts again at £5,000, with the nearest miss prize remaining at £1,000 each week.

If there is more than one winner the jackpot will be shared and, similarly, if there is more than one runner-up the nearest miss prize will also be shared.

RESULTS

CLOSING DATE FOR POSTAL ENTRIES
Thursday 9am, 14 May, 2015
Names of winners will be published on Saturday, 16 May or 17 May 2015

Winners

Competition number **S17**

JACKPOT WINNER **NO WINNER**

CONGRATULATIONS
Mrs M Baker, Torpoint, Cornwall
who wins the nearest miss prize of £1,000

The following competitors each receive a consolation prize of **£15**

C Avery, Eastleigh, Hants
M Baker, Southampton, Hants
J Blakely, Southampton, Hants
M Cavell, Southampton, Hants
D Collett, Southampton, Hants
S Daniels, Southampton, Hants
N Davis, Southampton, Hants
P Everson, Southampton, Hants
K Feher, Southampton, Hants
J Gardner, Wickham, Hants
G Grinham, Southampton, Hants
B Hodgson, Southampton, Hants
B Hunt, Portsmouth, Hants
C Lock, Everton, Hants
P London, Southampton, Hants
P Nott, Southampton, Hants
S Phelps, Chandlers Ford, Hants
M Ricketts, Southampton, Hants
T Thomas, Southampton, Hants
C Walsh, Southampton, Hants

Rules

1. You are allowed a minimum of 60 crosses and a maximum of 450 per coupon. Coupons with 451 or more will be disqualified. Entries altered defaced or mutilated will be invalid. Crosses must be distinct and separate. **2.** Competitors may submit as many coupons as they wish. Members of a family can send their entries in one envelope with a covering postal order or cheque. **3.** No responsibility can be accepted for entries delayed, lost or mislaid. Proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery. **4.** Payment may be made by postal order or cheque for the correct amount payable to Newsquest, and crossed '& Co.' Stamps **will not** be accepted in payment. **5.** A competitor cannot win more than one share of the prize money across all titles each week. **6.** The Editor's decision on winning entry or entries and matters relating to this competition is binding in honour only. NO CORRESPONDENCE CAN BE ENTERED INTO. **7.** Employees of NEWSQUEST Media Group and subsidiary companies and members of their families are not eligible to enter the competition. **8.** Address entries to FTB, Newspaper House, Test Lane, Southampton, SO16 9JX in a sealed envelope. Understamped entries are not accepted. **9.** Prize monies are held for and on behalf of winners. **10.** Do not send cash in the post. **11.** Winners will be required to participate in publicity. **12.** Photocopies not accepted. **13.** For rules go to www.dailyecho.co.uk/promotions/rules, www.newsquest.co.uk/terms or write in for a copy. **14.** If you pay by cheque your prize money will be paid to you once cheque has cleared.

CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE ONLY

An incident in an Eastleigh v Lincoln match

Please use black/blue ink and capitals

9 May, 2015

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S18

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Daily Echo

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Cheques payable to newsquest

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Deadlines for branch office collection boxes are as follows:
Bournemouth Echo 12 noon Tuesday
Southern Daily Echo 12noon Tuesday
Dorset Echo Closing time Monday

Deadlines for selected newsagents collection boxes as listed in:
Bournemouth Echo closing time Monday
Southern Daily Echo 10.00 am Tuesday
Dorset Echo Closing time Monday

A list of participating newsagents will be published in the Echos on the first Saturday of each month

Saints Spotlight

SAINTS' FIRST TEAM FIXTURES AND RESULTS 2014/15

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
AUGUST															
Sat 17 Liverpool .....A	**L 1-2**	Forster	**Clyne 1**	Fonte	Yoshida	Bertrand	Schneiderlin	Wanyama	Tadic*	S Davis**	W-Prowse	Pelle	Long*	Isgrove**	
Sat 23 West Brom .....H	**D 0-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Bertrand	Schneiderlin	Wanyama	Tadic	S Davis*	W-Prowse**	Pelle	Long*	Cork**	
Tues 26 Millwall (LC 2) .....A	**W 2-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Targett	S Davis	Wanyama**	Isgrove*	Long***	W-Prowse	**Pelle 1**	Tadic*	**Cork 1****	Ramirez***
Sat 30 West Ham .....A	**W 3-1**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Bertrand	**Schneiderlin 2**	S Davis	Tadic	W-Prowse**	Long*	**Pelle 1**	Ramirez*	Cork**	
SEPTEMBER															
Sat 13 Newcastle .....H	**W 4-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	Bertrand	**Cork 1*****	**Schneiderlin 1**	S Davis	Tadic**	Long*	**Pelle 2**	Wanyama*	W-Prowse**	Gardos***
Sat 20 Swansea .....A	**W 1-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida*	Bertrand	Cork**	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse***	Tadic	Long	Pelle	Gardos*	S Davis**	**Wanyama 1*****
Tues 23 Arsenal (LC3) .....A	**W 2-1**	Forster	**Clyne 1**	Fonte	Gardos	Targett**	Wanyama	Schneiderin	S Davis	**Tadic 1**	Mane*	Pelle	Long*	Bertrand**	
Sat 27 QPR .....H	**W 2-1**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	**Bertrand 1**	Wanyama**	Schneiderlin	S Davis	Tadic***	Mane*	**Pelle 1**	Long*	Cork**	Targett***
OCTOBER															
Sun 5 Tottenham .....A	**L 0-1**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	Bertrand	Wanyama*	Schneiderlin	S Davis	Tadic	Mane	Pelle	Long*		
Sat 18 Sunderland .....H	**W 8-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	Bertrand	**Cork 1**	Schneiderlin	S Davis*	**Tadic 1**	Long**	**Pelle 2****	**Wanyama 1***	Mane**	Mayuka***
Sat 25 Stoke .....H	**W 1-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	Bertrand	Cork*	Schneiderlin	S Davis**	Tadic	**Mane 1**	Pelle	Wanyama*	Gardos**	
Weds 29 Stoke (LC4) .....A	**W 3-2**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Gardos**	Targett	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	S Davis*	Tadic	**Long 1**	**Pelle 2**	Cork*	Alderweireld**	
NOVEMBER															
Sat 1 Hull .....A	**W 1-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	Bertrand	**Wanyama 1**	Schneiderlin	S Davis	Tadic**	Long*	Pelle	Mane*	Cork**	
Sat 8 Leicester .....H	**W 2-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	Bertrand	Wanyama	Schneiderlin***	S Davis*	Tadic	Mane**	Pelle	Cork*	**Long** 2**	Reed***
Mon 24 Aston Villa .....A	**D 1-1**	Forster	**Clyne 1**	Fonte	Alderweireld	Bertrand	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	Long**	Tadic	Mane*	Pelle	Mayuka*	Cork**	
Sun 30 Man City .....H	**L 0-3**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	Bertrand	Wanyama	Schneiderlin*	S Davis***	Tadic	Mane**	Pelle	Yoshida*	Long**	Mayuka***
DECEMBER															
Weds 3 Arsenal .....A	**L 0-1**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	Bertrand	Wanyama	Cork*	S Davis	Tadic**	Long***	Pelle	Yoshida*	Mane**	Mayuka***
Mon 8 Man United .....H	**L 1-2**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Bertrand	Wanyama	S Davis	Long**	Tadic*	Mane	**Pelle 1**	Hesketh*	Mayuka**	
Sat 13 Burnley .....A	**L 0-1**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	Bertrand	Wanyama	S Davis	Hesketh*	Tadic	Mane**	Pelle	W-Prowse*	Long**	
Tues 16 Sheff Utd (LC5) .....A	**L 0-1**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Gardos	Targett*	Wanyama***	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse	Bertrand	Mane**	Long	Isgrove*	Mayuka**	Alderweireld***
Sat 20 Everton .....H	**W 3-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	**Yoshida 1**	Bertrand	Reed	W-Prowse*	S Davis	Long**	**Pelle 1**	Targett*	Gape**	
Fri 26 Crystal Palace .....A	**W 3-1**	Forster	Clyne***	Gardos	**Alderweireld 1**	Yoshida	**Bertrand 1**	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse	S Davis*	**Mane 1**	Pelle**	Wanyama*	Long**	McCarthy***
Sat 28 Chelsea .....H	**D 1-1**	Forster	Yoshida**	Fonte	Alderweireld	Targett	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	S Davis***	Tadic*	**Mane 1**	Pelle	W-Prowse*	Gardos**	Long***
JANUARY															
Thurs 1 Arsenal .....H	**W 2-0**	Forster	Alderweireld	Fonte	Gardos**	Bertrand	Wanyama	S Davis	W-Prowse	**Tadic*** 1**	**Mane* 1**	Pelle	Reed*	Yoshida**	Long***
Sun 4 Ipswich (FAC 3) .....H	**D 1-1**	Forster	W-Prowse	Fonte	Gardos	Bertrand	Wanyama	**Schneiderlin 1**	Long	S Davis	Tadic*	Pelle	Isgrove*		
Sun 11 Man United .....A	**W 1-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld*	Bertrand	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse	S Davis***	Elia**	Pelle	Gardos*	**Tadic** 1**	Reed***
Weds 14 Ipswich (FAC 3) .....A	**W 1-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Garods	Bertrand	Targett	Wanyama*	Reed	W-Prowse	Tadic**	**Long 1**	S Davis*	Pelle**	
Sat 17 Newcastle .....A	**W 2-1**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Gardos	Bertrand	Reed	S Davis	Tadic**	W-Prowse*	**Elia*** 2**	Pelle	Cork*	Long**	Targett***
Sat 24 Crystal Palace (FAC 4) .H	**L 2-3**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Gardos*	Bertrand	Cork**	S Davis	Tadic	W-Prowse	Elia	**Pelle 1**	Targett*	Long** ***	Seager***
FEBRUARY															
Sun 1 Swansea .....H	**L 0-1**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Bertrand	Reed*	S Davis	Tadic	W-Prowse	Elia**	Pelle	Mane*	Seager**	
Sat 7 QPR .....A	**W 1-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida*	Targett	Wanyama**	S Davis	**Mane 1**	W-Prowse	Elia***	Pelle	Gardos*	Schneiderlin**	Tadic***
Weds 11 West Ham .....H	**D 0-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Gardos	Yoshida	Wanyama	Reed**	Mane***	S Davis	Elia*	Pelle	Tadic*	W-Prowse**	Djuricic***
Sun 22 Liverpool .....H	**L 0-2**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Targett	Wanyama	S Davis*	W-Prowse**	Djuricic***	Elia	Pelle	Schneiderlin*	Mane**	Tadic***
Sat 28 West Brom .....A	**L 0-1**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Gardos*	Bertrand	Wanyama**	Schneiderlin	Tadic***	Mane	Pelle	Elia*	S Davis**	Long***
MARCH															
Tue 3 Crystal Palace .....H	**W 1-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Bertrand	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	**Mane 1**	Djuricic***	Elia*	Pelle**	Tadic*	Long**	W-Prowse***
Sun 15 Chelsea .....A	**D 1-1**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	Bertrand	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	**Tadic** 1**	Mane	S Davis*	Long***	W-Prowse*	Djuricic**	Pelle***
Sat 21 Burnley .....H	**W 2-0**	Forster*	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	Bertrand	S Davis	Schneiderlin	Tadic**	Mane	**Long 1**	Pelle	K Davis*	Wanyama**	
APRIL															
Sat 4 Everton .....A	**L 0-1**	K Davis	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld***	Bertrand	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	Long	W-Prowse**	Elia*	Pelle	Tadic*	Mane**	Djuricic***
Sat 11 Hull .....H	**W 1-0**	K Davis	Alderweireld	Fonte	Yoshida	Bertrand	Wanyama*	Schneiderlin	Long***	S Davis	Mane**	**Pelle 1**	**W-Prowse* 1**	Tadic**	Elia***
Sat 18 Stoke .....A	**L 1-2**	K Davis	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Bertrand**	Alderweireld	**Schneiderlin 1**	Tadic*	Mane	S Davis***	Pelle	W-Prowse*	Long**	Elia***
Sat 25 Tottenham .....H	**D 2-2**	K Davis	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Bertrand	Alderweireld	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse*	Mane	S Davis**	**Pelle 2**	Long*	Elia**	
MAY															
Sat 2 Sunderland .....A	**L 1-2**	K Davis	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Bertrand	Alderweireld	Wanyama**	Long*	W-Prowse	**Mane*** 1**	Pelle	Djuricic*	S Davis**	Elia***
Sat 9 Leicester .....A															
Sat 16 Aston Villa .....H															
Sun 24 Man City .....A															

	LA	LG	CA	CG	CSA	CSG
ARTUR BORUC	0	0	0	0	50	0
CODY CROPPER	0	0	0	0	0	0
KELVIN DAVIS	5(1)	0	0	0	297(2)	0
FRASER FORSTER	30	0	7	0	37	0
PAULO GAZZANIGA	0	0	0	0	18(1)	0
RYAN BERTRAND	31	2	4(1)	0	36(1)	2
MATT TARGETT	3(3)	0	5(1)	0	8(4)	0
JOSE FONTE	34	0	7	0	218(5)	13
FLORIN GARDOS	5(6)	0	6	0	11(6)	0
TOBY ALDERWEIRELD	23	1	0(2)	0	23(2)	1
MAYA YOSHIDA	18(3)	1	1	0	65(4)	3
JACK STEPHENS	0	0	0	0	0(1)	0

	LA	LG	CA	CG	CSA	CSG
NATHANIEL CLYNE	32	2	6	1	96(5)	5
JACK CORK	5(7)	2	1(3)	1	128(25)	3
HARRISON REED	4(3)	0	1	0	6(10)	0
MORGAN SCHNEIDERLIN	24(2)	4	4	1	228(33)	15
VICTOR WANYAMA	23(6)	3	6	0	49(10)	3
STEVEN DAVIS	30(3)	0	5(1)	0	92(21)	6
LLOYD ISGROVE	0(1)	0	1(2)	0	2(4)	0
SAM MCQUEEN	0	0	0	0	0(1)	0
GASTON RAMIREZ	0(1)	0	0(1)	0	27(23)	8
DUSAN TADIC	24(7)	4	5(1)	1	29(8)	5
SADIO MANE	21(6)	7	2	0	23(6)	7
JAMES WARD-PROWSE	16(8)	1	5	0	51(38)	2

	LA	LG	CA	CG	CSA	CSG
SAM GALLAGHER	0	0	0	0	3(17)	2
SHANE LONG	14(15)	3	5(2)	1	19(17)	4
EMMANUEL MAYUKA	0(5)	0	0(1)	0	3(16)	1
GRAZIANO PELLE	34(1)	11	5(1)	4	39(2)	15
JAY RODRIGUEZ	0	0	0	0	59(17)	26
JAKE HESKETH	1(1)	0	0	0	1(1)	0
DOMINIC GAPE	0(1)	0	0	0	0(1)	0
JASON MCCARTHY	0(1)	0	0	0	0(1)	0
ELJERO ELIA	8(5)	2	1	0	9(5)	2
RYAN SEAGER	0(1)	0	0(1)	0	0(2)	0
FILIP DJURICIC	1(4)	0	0	0	1(4)	0

KEY: LA: league appearances. LG: league goals. CA: cup appearances. CG: cup goals. CSA: career Saints appearances. CSG: career Saints goals.

Non-league Football

Bennett looks up

CARL Bennett is "100 per cent" committed to leading Whitchurch United to even bigger and better things next season.

The Southampton-based former Romsey Town boss admits "I've had the time of my life" after leading the Jam Boys to a superb sixth-placed Sydenhams Premier finish in his first season in charge.

Now he and his players are hungry for more.

"No disrespect to Romsey, but it's so different at Whitchurch," he said.

"I literally just have to manage the team, not get involved with all the bits and pieces off the field.

"Cara Lewis, our secretary and physio, is brilliant and does everything for me.

"And when I turn up at the ground on matchdays the chairman Brian Jackman and committee members are already there getting things organised. All I have to think of is who I'm going to pick to play."

When Bennett (below) was approached by the north Hampshire club about staying on for a second season it was, as they say, a no-brainer.

"They asked if I was happy to stay on and I said of course I am. Whitchurch gave me my first chance to manage on my own and they're well chuffed with what's been achieved. I want to be a bit loyal to them and see if I can take them higher," he said.

"We've finished sixth this season and there's no reason why we can't push on for top-three or four.

"Who says we can't?

"Danny Bowers did it with Follands (in 20013/14) and Alresford did it two seasons running before Dan (Robinson) and Tim (Cole) left.

"There's no reason we can't push on and become that side.

"We've not got money, but what we have got is a great group of players who all want to work together.

"I'm making no big predictions about where we're going to finish next year, but I'd love to improve on this season. I don't want to stop here.

"The top teams this season are up there for a reason, they showed consistency all the way through. After a good start, we lost that consistency mid-season but then found it again at the end."

Reflective of their manager, a fair chunk of the Whitchurch side hail from the Southampton area.

"For me, we've got the right mix," said Bennett.

"We brought in lads from Romsey and a few from Sholing – Mitch Fear, Jack McCarthy etc – and I inherited three good players who were already at Whitchurch – Tom Lockyer, Scott Hassell and Adam Pearson.

"(Former Romsey forward) Matt Austin came in towards the end of the season and gave us a different dimension. We were short of a centre-half when he first joined us, so he played a few games back there, and then he played centre midfield against Farnborough in the Hampshire Senior Cup.

"Then an opportunity arose up front and he's been there ever since. He scored seven or eight goals in 15 games which isn't a bad return."

TITLE: Wade Elliott lifts the League One trophy.

Wade's way into coaching

FORMER Hampshire non-League star Wade Elliott has been offered a path into coaching by Bristol City manager Steve Cotterill.

Elliott, a former Saints youth player who famously earned his big Football League break when he moved from Bashley to AFC Bournemouth for £5,000 in 2000, went on to make more than 200 appearances across six seasons at Dean Court.

This term the Southampton-born playmaker has captained Bristol City to the League One title.

Elliott, now 36, has not been offered playing terms with the Robins for next season, but Cotterill is keen to keep the ex-Burnley and Birmingham City man on board.

Cotterill told the club's official website: "Wade is fit enough to carry on playing, which is his dilemma.

"For me, due to where we may need to strengthen, I've offered Wade a coaching job.

"I'd be delighted if he accepted our offer to be in charge of the under-21s.

"He has to think about that and it's a big decision for him.

"He would be an excellent addition to my staff. As someone who knows me, he has all the credentials to be a good, young coach.

"I think it would be a good opportunity if he took up the role because it's something I take a great interest in.

"Wade knows what we've done here in the past 18 months and would be able to transfer that on a daily basis."

Cotterill added: "There is no time frame. He will have other offers to carry on playing and I don't want to finish his career prematurely if he still wants to play."

DOLPHINS BOARD BACKING KILLICK

VICE-chairman Chris Reeves has rubbished speculation over the future of Poole Town boss Tom Killick, insisting: "We could not wish for a better manager."

Crestfallen Killick said he would not want to "rely on previous successes" after the Dolphins had missed out on promotion to the Conference South, but supporters quickly made it known that they wanted him to stay.

Killick's comments prompted a flurry of activity on the club's official forum, while Reeves reported that several fans had sent messages of support directly to the manager in a bid to ensure he remained at Tatnam.

Pledging the board's unflinching support for their man, Reeves said: "We could not wish for a better manager than Tom Killick. The club has been blessed to enjoy the fruits of his commitment, drive and loyalty for the past 11 years.

"We have been on a terrific ride and our supporters have been spoiled rotten by the success.

"I know just how much the overwhelming majority of people appreciate that.

"Some of the emails of support received by Tom were enough to bring a tear to your eye. There is quite clearly desperation among the bulk of our fan base to know he will be committing his future to the club."

After seemingly having the Southern Premier Division title wrapped up, Poole suffered four defeats in eight April matches to hand Corby Town the title. And worse followed when they made a shock play-off semi-final exit at the hands of St Neots.

SPECULATION: Poole Town boss Tom Killick

"Everybody understands how disappointed the supporters feel at the moment, but nobody feels that more than Tom and, without a shadow of doubt, we feel he is the best man to put that disappointment to bed," said Reeves.

"That's not to say we automatically expect to win the championship next season. Teams will be going into the new campaign with huge budgets for their playing staff and we have to do our best to compete with those clubs. We have done consistently over the past few years and I have no doubt we will do again."

And Reeves, who revealed he had already started discussing plans for next season with Killick, said he had been given "no inkling" that the manager had any plans to quit. "I have known Tom since he was 16 and would probably feel it more than others should he move on, but that has not entered my thoughts," he added.

"It will be his 12th season and nothing he has said leads me to believe he won't be with us next season and, hopefully, beyond."

St Neots lost Monday's play-off final 1-0 at Truro City. Roared on by a 1,450 crowd, the White Tigers booked their ticket back to the National League (Conference) South thanks to Shane White's second-half penalty.

Poole, meanwhile, will be joined in the Southern Premier next season by Stratford Town, who pipped Larkhall Athletic 3-2 in the Southern One South & West play-off final.

FOLLOW NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL ONLINE - DAILYECHO.CO.UK

Non-league Football

OUT OF CONTRACT: Stuart Fleetwood

Fleetwood on free

EASTLEIGH'S out-of-contract forward Stuart Fleetwood will not be making a permanent move to Forest Green Rovers.

The 29-year-old, who made 17 appearances for FGR after joining them on loan in January, is one of six players being released by the Gloucestershire club this summer and is now a free agent.

Like Eastleigh, Forest Green came off second best in last week's Vanarama Conference play-off semi-finals.

While the Spitfires lost out 5-1 on aggregate to Grimsby Town, FGR bowed out 3-0 over the two legs to Grimsby's May 17 Wembley promotion final opponents Bristol Rovers.

Fleetwood tweeted: "Whatever happens, it's been a pleasure playing with all these lads. Enjoyed my time + wish everyone all the best!!"

Former Saints under-21 defender Aarran Racine is one of a handful of out-of-contract players to be offered a new deal by Rovers boss Ady Pennock.

Three ex-Salisbury players – Clovis Kamdjo, Elliot Frear and Rob Sinclair – are already under contract for 2015/16 at The New Lawn, as is ex-Dorchester defender Charlie Clough.

AWARD FOR HILL

Spitfires' run nets boss prize

EASTLEIGH'S magnificent run of five straight wins at the end of the regular Vanarama Conference season earned manager Richard Hill the manager-of-the-month award for April.

A phenomenal debut season in non-League's top flight ultimately ended in disappointment for the Spitfires who were well beaten 5-1 on aggregate by Grimsby Town in the play-off semi-finals.

But at the start of the campaign, Eastleigh fans would never have dreamed their side would finish as high as fourth on their first visit to non-League's top table.

On receiving the April prize as best boss, Hill said: "I am very pleased to have received this award, especially at this time of the season when it is the business end and also the end of another historic season for Eastleigh Football Club. It shows how far the club has come in the past year.

"I am not one for self-praise, but in my two-and-a-half years here Eastleigh have reached two play-off semi-finals and won a championship.

"I have a good, experienced set of players who have to do the job on the pitch."

The official award panel said: "During the last month of the season there have been many clubs under pressure to achieve results and so a number of candidates came to the fore.

"The Spitfires' performances shone through in April after coming from behind on a number of occasions under the astute leadership of Richard.

"Not only did Eastleigh get themselves into the play-off positions, despite only gaining promotion last season, importantly they stayed there.

"Richard's efforts in getting the club to this position mean the accolade for April is well deserved."

AWARD: Eastleigh manager Richard Hill

T&E will play on

TOTTON & Eling want to shout it from the rooftops that there WILL be Wessex and youth team football played at Miller Park next season.

Although T&E's first-team have had a tough time of it this term, finishing second-to-bottom of the Sydenhams Premier Division, the youth scene is flourishing.

Having started out with just two youth teams, that mushroomed to five in 2014/15 and there are five more in the pipeline for next season.

The youth section is helping to get the whole club on a more stable financial footing and plans are underway to make T&E not only an FA Charter Standard Adult Club, but to work towards Charter Standard Youth Club and then Charter Standard Community Club status.

Rob Lomax, the Millers' Hampshire under-18 manager said: "There have been rumours going round that Totton & Eling are finished, but that's not the case.

"The club feel youth is the way forward and that side of things is thriving, but we will also incorporate the first team plus a new reserve side for youth players to progress to.

"You look at how AFC Portchester have thrived by building up their youth section and that's the model we plan to work on.

"I've been told twice this week that T&E are folding, but I can assure you that there will be adult and youth teams playing at Little Testwood Farm (Miller Park) next season."

QUESTION MARK

The main reason doubts have arisen over T&E's future is the question mark hanging over the lease of the ground, which was put out to tender by Totton & Eling Town Council in January.

No decision has yet been made, but Lomax and T&E chairman Andy Tipp had talks with the council last week.

"We're waiting for the paperwork, but the council have said we can carry on as we are next season," said Lomax.

"We'll be paying for the upkeep of the ground and everything else, but at least we've got security for next season. And the council have assured us that no matter who has the lease after that, the football club will be looked after and incorporated into that."

As part of the expansion of the youth section, T&E are looking for managers or teams to join/link up with the club at mini soccer and Tyro levels.

A current under-15 side is required to become T&E's under-16s next season or, alternatively, they need a manager to start a new under-16 team.

The Millers are also looking for under-16 and under-18 players for their Hampshire and Southampton Youth League sides next season – plus a reserve team manager.

There is also interest in starting a girls/ladies' team.

Anyone interested should email tandemillers1@gmail.com or call Mark Jones on 07986 769541.

GOT A STORY? EMAIL ECHOSPORT@DAILYECHO.CO.UK

Non-league Football

Tarbuck's hint

BRADLEY Tarbuck has hinted at a possible return to Dorchester Town if he doesn't secure a new contract at Portsmouth.

The winger is hopeful of landing a fresh Fratton Park deal after some impressive performances while on loan with the Magpies in the Southern Premier Division.

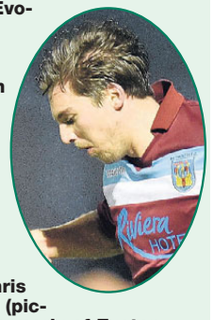
But if things don't go his way then Tarbuck, who spent the last three months of the season at the Avenue, believes a second Dorchester spell is possible.

"I'm hoping I get offered a new contract at Portsmouth," he said.

"If I don't, I'd like to keep my options open – and I know Dorchester are definitely one of those options."

Shephard deal

JASON Matthews has taken his first step towards preparing his Weymouth squad for another push towards Evo-Stik Southern Premier promotion next season.



The ex-Eastleigh goalkeeper has secured star midfielder Chris Shephard (pictured) – formerly of Exeter and Salisbury City – on a new one-year deal.

Declaring himself "delighted", Matthews said: "Chris has been our star performer on the whole and nobody can deny that. I wouldn't want him to go anywhere else."

Toast of Town

TOM Whelan was the toast of Verwood Town's end-of-season presentation night.

The Potterne Park midfielder finished the season playing in the Southern League for Poole Town having impressed Dolphins' boss Tom Killick.

But his efforts for the Potters were not forgotten as he cleaned up with the manager's player and supporters' player-of-the-year awards. Whelan also scored the goal of the season away at Petersfield.

Josh Buck was voted the chairman's young player-of-the-season, while the reserve team honours went to George Thomas (players' player), Matt Jones (manager's player) and Joe Kimber (goal of the season).

Dave Leigh lifted the President's Cup.

Baldacchino steals the show in cup

FORMER Blackfield & Langley and Sholing marksman Alex Baldacchino stole the show as AFC Portchester lifted the Sydenhams Wessex League Cup at Wicor Rec on Monday.

But while the super sub made the 1-0 result possible with an extra-time winner, Royals boss Graham Rix praised his sturdy backline who survived 40 minutes against league champions Petersfield Town with ten men following the dismissal of Joe Bye.

"Our back five were magnificent as they have been all season – they are unsung heroes," smiled Rix.

"The fact we won it after going down to ten men typifies the character and spirit in the squad."

Such was the strength and resilience of Portchester's rearguard that Petersfield struggled to create any chances of note – despite playing with Warren Hunt, Andy Todd, Jason Silver and Robbie Tambling up front in the latter stages.

Portchester carried the greater threat but looked as if they had shot themselves in the foot when Bye got a straight red for kicking out at Joe Richardson in midfield.

But that proved no obstacle to success for Rix's Royals as, with 101 minutes on the clock, Baldacchino capitalised on good work by Jack Salter-Vaile and Joe Noakes to head his side to victory in front of a 516 bank holiday crowd.

For Petersfield it was their second Wessex Cup final defeat in a row, having lost out to Alresford Town last year.

But the Love Lane lads still achieved their ultimate goal of winning the Sydenhams Premier title and promotion and will be allocated their new league later this month.

Giving Portchester credit for their victory, Petersfield assistant boss Jamie Hampson said: "Fair play to them. They battled well and, even when they went down to ten men, they grafted out the result they wanted."

It's been a dominant season for Portsmouth area sides in the Sydenhams League with Petersfield and Portchester claiming the two big prizes. The two clubs have also had the privilege of sending a player through to the professional ranks with Portchester's Andy Rinomhota joining Reading and Petersfield's Ed Dryden signing for Stoke City.

HARRY'S GAME

FORMER Christchurch winger Harry Cornick has thanked first-team boss Eddie Howe and development coach Stephen Purches for playing a part in his progress at AFC Bournemouth.

Cornick, unearthed by Priory in the Sydenhams Wessex League during Graham Kemp's time in charge, was handed his Cherries debut in the FA Cup third round at Rotherham, ***writes WENDY GEE***

He spent the latter part of this season getting a grounding in senior men's football by helping Lee Bradbury's Havant & Waterloovile into the Conference South play-offs.

Reflecting on his football education with Bournemouth, Cornick told the club website: "I have benefitted from working with all the coaches.

"Stephen Purches has done a lot of work on my decision-making around the box and we have also worked on me playing up front and on my finishing.

"It (finishing) isn't one of my strong points and, after games, he will tell me I could have scored six, even though I am happy with one or two.

"Being versatile is good because if there are injuries, you want to be the first one the manager calls up to train with the first team.

"He has also put his arm around me and told me 'come on, you're good enough. You need to show you want to be in the first team with performances in the development squad.'

"The manager (Howe) has given me chances to get involved and taken me on away trips.

"Everyone has give me confidence."

Meanwhile young Cherries striker Joe Quigley has completed a memorable campaign by being crowned youth team player-of-the-year.

Quigley was nominated for the award by academy manager Joe Roach and youth manager Carl Fletcher after helping Bournemouth win the Youth Alliance South-West title.

He also enjoyed valuable experience during a loan spell with Poole Town in the Southern Premier Division and was rewarded with his first professional contract.

"The award topped off a really good second year in the youth team for me," smiled Quigley.

"I knuckled down and tried to give it my all this season. I think I've improved."

● Cherries youth team goalkeeper Jordan Holmes has been named in Australia's under-20 squad for a training camp and a number of summer friendlies.

THERE'S MORE NON-LEAGUE COVERAGE IN THE DAILY ECHO

Non-league Football

ROTTEN LUCK: For Basingstoke manager Jason Bristow

VALIANT BID: Havant boss Lee Bradbury (left)

HAMPSHIRE SIDES FALL IN PLAY-OFFS

EASTLEIGH and Aldershot will not be getting another Hampshire team for company in the newly-named Vanarama National League (formerly Conference) next season.

On a hugely disappointing weekend for the county's leading Conference South clubs, both Basingstoke Town and Havant & Waterlooville failed to progress beyond the play-off semi-finals.

Jason Bristow's Basingstoke appeared to be in the box seat for the final when they drew 1-1 away at Whitehawk in the first leg.

But the north Hampshire club could not make home advantage count in the second leg as Hawks' Jake Robinson netted early in the second half to take Steve King's Sussex visitors through 2-1 on aggregate.

It was rotten luck for 'Stoke who had twice gone close to scoring in a tight first-half with ex-Eastleigh and Winchester striker Chris Flood hitting the post and Rob Dickie having a header cleared off the line.

Despite the defeat, Basingstoke chairman Rafi Razzak was far from downbeat afterwards.

"Although today's result wasn't what we had all hoped for we must remember that, without doubt, this has got to be one of our best seasons ever," he said.

"Jason Bristow and (assistant) Michael Gilkes have done a fantastic job creating a great atmosphere and morale in the locker room and putting together a great squad. Every single player should hold their heads up high and be proud.

"The club had a great FA Cup run, reaching the first round proper and truly pushing Telford to their limits. We also reached the first round of the FA Trophy.

"In the league we continued to challenge for the title until the final weeks of the season and achieved a highly respectable third place with 73 points.

"This is the highest position Basingstoke has ever reached in the Conference South and for that we should all be very proud of our team for making history."

Razzak added: "I will be meeting with Jason and Michael next week to discuss their plans for next season."

It was a choker of a weekend too for Lee Bradbury's Havant. They fought valiantly to try and overturn a 2-0 home defeat by Boreham Wood and, when Brian Dutton thundered in a 16th-minute header at Meadow Park, it looked to be game on for the Hampshire club.

But a defensive howler allowed Wood's Ricky Shakes to level matters 1-1 on the day and, three minutes later, it was game up for Bradbury's men when the division's top scorer Lee Angol plunged the Hawks into arrears.

Substitute JJ Hooper hit back for 2-2, but it was Boreham Wood who went through 4-2 on aggregate to book a home final with Whitehawk today (Saturday, May 9).

Despite missing out on a crack at joining Eastleigh in non-League's top flight, Bradbury was proud of his team's performance.

He and his players dedicated it to absent chairman Derek Pope, who had suffered a heart-attack during the first leg at Westleigh Park.

"We may have lost, but I'm sure Derek would have been proud of the players," said Bradbury.

"They gave everything and, at one stage, we looked like we would go on and win it.

"The intensity and work-rate the players showed was second to none and they showed how much they wanted it.

"Once we scored early you could see the confidence drain out of Boreham Wood but, unfortunately, one defensive mistake gifted them a goal and allowed them to regain their composure."

Youth is the way ahead for T&E first team

THE pathway has already been established for young players progressing into Totton & Eling's first team.

Although it was the return of several familiar faces that so nearly inspired a great escape from the Sydenhams Premier relegation zone, 'old' timers like Steve Jenkin, Danny Steer and Steve and Chris Marwood had a healthy sprinkling of youth players for company.

"Since Lee Thorne (co-manager) and Jo Tessem (coach) took over in January, several youth players have made starts for the first team," explained Rob Lomax, manager of T&E's Hampshire under-18 side.

"In fact a game hasn't gone by since that time that some member of the youth section hasn't been involved."

With two under-18, one under-16 and two under-13 sides operating this season, T&E

COACH: Jo Tessem

already have close to 100 youth players on their books.

"Next year we're in chats for under-9 and under-10 teams and we're really trying to build the youth section up," said former Pace Youth man Lomax.

Having finished second-to-bottom of the Sydenhams Premier, T&E have placed themselves in pole position should a reprieve from relegation be up for grabs.

There have been several instances in the past when clubs have escaped the drop due league reorganisation or lack of numbers.

"Fingers crossed our senior team will still be in the Wessex Premier next season if only one club is relegated," said Lomax.

"But if we do go down to Wessex One, we will rebuild and go again.

"The youth section are taking on the cost of the upkeep of the football pitch. We want to get the whole club on a stronger financial footing and move forward."

CALL NON-LEAGUE WRITER WENDY GEE ON 023 8042 4483

Non-league Football

Reserves pay price

SHOLING Reserves paid the price for poor finishing in Wednesday's Wyvern League Challenge Cup final.

The Boatmen's second string carved out plenty of opportunities to score against Petersfield Town at Winchester's Denplan City Ground but, ultimately, it was the Rams who found the target in a 1-0 victory.

In the first half especially Sholing opened up the Petersfield defence time and time again, but Coby Wilson (pictured), Josh Oxlade and Elliot Richards, twice, all sent chances high or wide.

Their punishment was to get caught by a sucker punch when Ben Wason's header looped over 'keeper Jordan Brooks and into the top corner.

The tone of the game changed after that with Sholing struggling to break down the opposition.

Play became increasing physical after the break with Petersfield reduced to ten men on 67 minutes following a dangerous challenge.

Richards should have taken advantage but, when presented with the ball eight yards out, he skewed his effort horribly wide.

Sholing sub Serge Fon almost scored with his first touch, but his volley was tipped over the bar and Petersfield held strong to lift the trophy.

The Boatmen have another chance of silverware on Monday (May 11) when they travel to Romsey Town FC to take on AFC Totton's reserves in the Wyvern Shield final.

Trial for recruits

GOSPORT Borough's county under-18 team are holding a trial for new recruits.

Manager BJ Green would like to hear from players interested in representing the club in the Hampshire County Youth League's top flight for 2015/16.

Anyone interested in attending a trial should ring Bjay on 07884 206762 or email him, stating position, date of birth and contact details, at barry.green06@sky.com.

BENTLEY 'WORTH MILLIONS'

DAVE Malone has joked that it would take a "multi-million-pound offer" to prise master marksman Warren Bentley away from Winchester City.

Wendy Gee
wendy.gee@dailyecho.co.uk
NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

Although City have signed the Sydenhams Premier top scorer on an extended contract, they are aware that he is ambitious to play higher and would not dream of standing in his way.

But, at the same time, Bentley – scorer of 56 league and cup goals this term - is loving life at the Denplan City Ground and director of football Malone stressed that only the right offer from the right club would take him elsewhere.

"Warren has signed an extended contract and he's staying with us - unless a multi-million offer comes in for him!" said Malone.

"There have been a lot of people asking me if he's staying and a lot of enquiries from clubs asking the question. The fact that he's on contract makes a difference in that respect.

"I know that Warren is very happy at Winchester and he'll be staying with us unless he gets an offer he can't refuse, in which case we wouldn't stand in his way.

"He wouldn't want to go to another Wessex club or even the next level up. But if a big club came in for him that would be a different issue.

"If not, he's happy where he is and we're extremely very to have him. He's scored a lot of goals and he's integral to what we are trying to do."

Bentley scooped three of the main awards at the club presentation night, winning supporters' player and players' player-of-the-year as well as collecting the supporters' golden boot.

Wideman Adam 'Taz' Roberts captured Paul Masters' vote as manager's player-of-the-year, while City's outstanding reserve player of 2014/15 was Dan Spreadbury.

DAVE MALONE

SYDENHAMS PREMIER DIVISION TOP SCORERS 2014/15

56 – Warren Bentley (Winchester City)
42 – Steve Hutchings (Moneyfields)
34 – Scott Joyce (Bemerton Heath Harlequins)
33 – Warren Hunt (Petersfield Town)
31 – Andy Todd (Petersfield Town)
28 – Alfie Rutherford (Moneyfields)
26 –Jamie Musselwhite (AFC Portchester)
24 – Danny Phillips (Whitchurch Utd)
22 – Gary Austin (Horndean), Zach Glasspool (Winchester City), Nathan Paxton (Horndean)
20– Jake Rowley (Blackfield & Langley)

SYDENHAMS DIVISION ONE TOP SCORERS 2014/15

40 – Brett Denham (Tadley Calleva)
28 – Jesse Waller-Lassen (Team Solent)
27 – Kabba Jack (New Milton Town)
23 – Michael Dark (US Portsmouth), Jared Wetherick (Cowes Sports)
22 – Sam Knowles (Fleet Spurs)
19 – Callum Coker (US Portsmouth), Eddie Perrett (Amesbury Town)
18 – Danny Finnigan (Amesbury Town)

CALL SPORTS EDITOR SIMON CARTER ON 023 8042 4515

Non-league Football

STAR MAN: Warren Bentley

FOLLAND 'JEWELS' HEADING TO CITY

TWO of the most dazzling jewels in the Folland Sports crown are heading to Winchester City this summer.

Although they cannot officially register until next month, skipper Jamie Barron and goalkeeper Ryan Gosney have been lined up to join this season's Sydenhams Premier Division runners-up, ***writes WENDY GEE***

Gosney – younger brother of Gosport Borough winger Mike – is already a well-known face at the Denplan City Ground, having been part of Guy Butters' Wessex title-winning side of 2011/12 when he shared the goalkeeping duties with Rory Anderson.

His arrival could spell the exit of experienced former AFC Totton and Gosport Borough 'keeper Gareth Barfoot, although nothing has been decided as yet.

"We've had a look at finances and what is best for the club, it's a combination of the two," said Malone.

"It's a hard thing to do, but we've got to do what's right for the club.

"The ball's in Gareth's court really.

"We haven't closed the door on him and we're prepared to negotiate but, knowing his own requirements, I'm not sure Gareth would be happy to have to compete for a place. He played for Salisbury last week and I'd imagine he'd want to be somewhere where he would play every game.

"I've nothing but praise for Gareth, he's a top bloke and he's been very professional.

"But Ryan is marginally a better option for us taking into account the cost and his age.

"We've tried to get him over here several times in the past and, with things breaking up at bit at Follands, now is a good time."

Like Gosney, midfielder Barron played a huge part in helping establish Follands as a top-bracket Sydenhams Premier club.

But having finished a highest-ever third last term, the second half of this season proved a difficult one for the Planemakers after manager Danny Bowers was forced to bow out through illness.

With injuries and suspensions biting deep and one or two key players leaving, Bowers' assistant Dave Lewis did a sterling job to keep the side competitive in trying circumstances on and off the park.

And, through it all, he could always rely on his trusty captain Barron to set the standards.

Lewis recently said of Barron: "Jamie oozes class and is on a completely different level.

LINED UP: Jamie Barron (left)

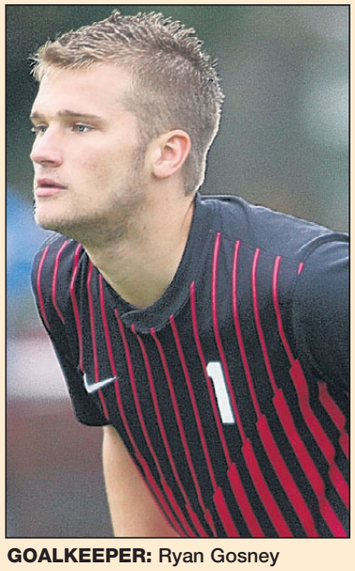
"Whoever signs him is going to get a very good player.

"Jamie's only 24 or 25 and his best years are still ahead of him."

As a former Follands man himself, Winchester boss Paul Masters has long admired Barron.

"I've never worked with Jamie before but I've watched him a few times.

"I know Dave Lewis well and he speaks very highly of him," he said.



GOALKEEPER: Ryan Gosney

"It's a no-brainer for us. Jamie's a decent midfielder who scores goals.

"Both he and Ryan (Gosney) are good players who will better the squad we've got.

"We don't want to change too much for next season, but we wanted to get things sorted quickly and we have.

"We're still preparing for the Wessex League next season, although there's still a small chance that could change (if City are accepted into the Southern League as runners-up).

"Whatever happens, it won't make any difference to the squad. Everyone we've got is good enough to play in the league above.

"I only had a 16-man squad this season and that's all I wanted. Sometimes if the squad's too big you get one or two players drifting off elsewhere because they're not playing enough, so I didn't want to run with too many people.

"We've got six weeks off now and we'll be back at the end of June to make sure we start next season sharp and bright."

Malone too is of the mindset that, barring two or three additions, Winchester will benefit from leaving the squad well alone this summer.

"We won 13 out of our last 14 games and drew the other, so the last thing we'd want to do is tip the whole thing upside-down," he said. "The vast majority of the players we've got will be staying."

Looking forward to welcoming Barron into the fold, Malone added: "Every time he's played against us, he's been a pain in the a***!

"He scored a very good goal against us last season and he will supplement what we've got here."

United in fixture

HAMWORTHY United have scheduled their first pre-season fixture.

Shane Traynor's side will welcome Western League Gillingham Town to The County Ground on Tuesday, July 28 (7.45pm).

Gillingham will make the journey a week after entertaining Hamworthy's Sydenhams Premier rivals Whitchurch United.

Cherries friendly

SYDENHAMS Division One club Amesbury Town will welcome an AFC Bournemouth XI to their Bonnymead Park home for a pre-season friendly.

The Cherries are due to travel to Wiltshire on Tuesday, July 21 for a 7.30pm kick-off.

Magpies turn round

DORCHESTER Town's players have been praised for the way they turned their season around after the resignation of former boss Graham Kemp.

The Magpies were looking like candidates for relegation in mid-January, having lost 17 of their 26 games in the Evo-Stik Southern Premier Division.

However, they went on to pick up 31 points from a possible 54, losing only five of their remaining 18 league fixtures, to finish 17th in the table.

"We've had some good performances since the change of management and that has been reflected in our results," said current player-boss Mark Jermyn.

"I think we were eighth in the form guide at the end of the season and that's not bad for a team that had pretty much been losing every week."

Havant v Pompey

HAVANT & Waterlooville will be expecting a packed house at Westleigh Park on Saturday, July 11 (3pm).

That marks the date of their annual pre-season friendly against SkyBet League Two neighbours Portsmouth.

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EASTLEIGH 2014/15 LEAGUE RESULTS

AUGUST
9 Nuneaton Town (A) . . . .W 3-0
14 Aldershot Town (H) . . .W 1-0
16 Gateshead (H) . . . . . .D 2-2
23 Dover Athletic (A) . . . . .L 1-2
25 Welling United (H) . . . .W 3-1
30 Macclesfield Town (A) . .L 0-2

SEPTEMBER
6 Southport (H) . . . . . .W 2-1
9 Dartford (A) . . . . . .D 2-2
13 Altrincham (A) . . . . . .D 3-3
16 Forest Green Rovers (H)D 2-2
20 Braintree Town (H) . . . .W 1-0
27 Wrexham (A) . . . . . .L 0-3
30 Bristol Rovers (H) . . . . .D 1-1

OCTOBER
4 Barnet (A) . . . . . .L 0-1
11 FC Halifax Town (H) . . .W 4-1
18 Nuneaton Town (H) . . .W 2-1

NOVEMBER
1 Chester (H) . . . . . .W 3-2
2 Forest Green Rovers (A) .D 1-1
22 Aldershot Town (A) . . .W 2-0
29 Torquay United (A) . . . .L 0-2

DECEMBER
2 Dartford (H) . . . . . .W 2-0
10 Alfreton Town (A) . . . . .L 2-3
20 AFC Telford United (A) W 4-3
26 Woking (H) . . . . . .D 2-2
28 Braintree Town (A) . . . .W 5-1

JANUARY
1 Woking (A) . . . . . .D 1-1
4 Altrincham (H) . . . . . .L 0-2
10 Lincoln City (H) . . . . . .W 4-0
27 Grimsby Town (H) . . . . .L 0-1

FEBRUARY
7 AFC Telford United (H) . .D 3-3
10 Southport (A) . . . . . .W 2-1
14 Torquay United (H) . . . .L 1-2
21 Chester (A) . . . . . .W 1-0
28 Macclesfield Town (H) .W 4-0

MARCH
7 Bristol Rovers (A) . . . . . .W 2-1
10 Kidderminster (A) . . . . .W 3-1
14 Barnet (H) . . . . . .L 1-2
17 Wrexham (H) . . . . . .D 2-2
21 Grimsby Town (A) . . . . .L 1-2
28 Gateshead (A) . . . . . .W 3-2

APRIL
4 Dover Athletic (H) . . . . . .L 0-1
6 Welling United (A) . . . . .W 2-1
11 Alfreton Town (H) . . . . .W 3-1
14 FC Halifax Town (A) . . .W 2-0
18 Lincoln City (A) . . . . . .W 2-1
25 Kidderminster H . . . . . .W 2-1

Eastleigh fans join in with the Grimsby celebrations at the end of the game. Order no: 34700411

PICTURES: STUART MARTIN Order no: 34710981

Order no: 34710920

Eastleigh Fans celebrate their season with Michael Green. Order no: 34710852

Eastleigh Fans celebrate their amazing season. Order no: 34710818

Order no: 34702500

Eastleigh Fans at the start of the game. Order no: 34702472

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A Grimsby fan gives her hat to a young Eastleigh fan at the end of the game.

Order no: 34710976

FAN-TASTIC DAY

Eastleigh fans at the Vanarama Conference playoff second leg against Grimsby.

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Order no: 34710892

Eastleigh Fans and Grimsby fans embrace at the end of the game.

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BOOK of the WEEK

Interesting: My Autobiography
By Steve Davis with Lance Hardy

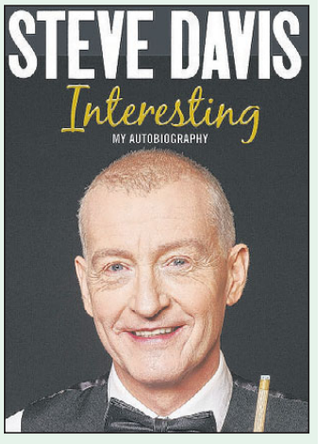
Sportsbookofthemonth.com price: £9, saving 40% on rrp

IS IT really thirty years since Steve 'Interesting' Davis and the Ulsterman with a permanent smile, the bespectacled Dennis Taylor, contested snooker's most compelling world championship finale, now commonly referred to as the 'Black Ball Final'?

The BBC's largest-ever post-midnight audience, 18.5 million people, stayed up to watch as the final went to the last frame. Davis led 62-44 with just 22 points on the table; the denouement was pure drama as the world title was to be determined by one player's ability to pot the final black ball. Taylor did so, at the fourth attempt, leaving an ashen-faced Davis visibly distraught.

That he would return and claim the world championship title three more times (and six in all) is testimony to the man's determination. He later won the BBC sports personality of the year award and was recognised with royal honours. His autobiography is, arguably, overdue.

However, if you're expecting fireworks, revelations of womanising, drug-taking, gambling and heavy drinking, then take a



look at this book's cover. It's Steve Davis we're talking about, not some overpaid athlete who employs his own PR firm and is rarely seen sans arm candy.

Yet Davis's story is often engaging, from his London council house roots, where his fascination with the game was encouraged by his father, a snooker fan who worked on the buses, to the point at which he came to the attention of an accountant turned snooker club proprietor, Barry Hearn, who recognised Davis's enormous potential. The pair would form a partnership that has lasted to this day, their respective skills continually complementing each other, making them both very rich men.

Davis won his first world snooker championship in 1981 aged just 23; he soon became snooker's biggest star, winning a series of titles across the globe. One of this book's faults, however, (unless you're an avid snooker fan) is the endless detail it provides of Davis's dominance in matches against the game's other big players. He acquired the 'interesting' moniker during the 1980s, initially a satirical epithet that served the producers of *Spitting Image* well, but some of this book's meticulous detail does little to dispel the notion that Davis possesses a genuinely interesting personality.

Indeed, it could be argued that this book is only a partial autobiography for we learn plenty about his snooker life, but little of it beyond the green baize. Pity, because that would have been interesting.

Saints Spotlight

Mourinho proud of title march

JOSE Mourinho's pride at the way Chelsea stormed to the Premier League is clear, so too his desire to kick on next season.

Last weekend's 1-0 win over Crystal Palace secured the Blues' first Premier League crown in five years.

It was the third league title Mourinho has overseen during two spells at Stamford Bridge and one secured with record-breaking dominance.

Chelsea will end the season on top for a 274th successive day, underlining the dominance and consistency the Portuguese's side have shown this term.

"It pleases me, the title, pleases me the way we did it and the consistency of being there from day one to the last day," he said, ahead of welcoming Liverpool to Stamford Bridge on Sunday.

"That is absolutely fantastic, to keep that stability, that strength keeping us there all the time.

"There were difficult periods, where we lost points, where we lost matches, periods where we lost players. We went through all these problems to go there from day one until the last day of the season.

"I am not counting the days, I am not trying to go for records. I just think for the boys to keep that stability also in their emotions - because it is very important to keep stable emotionally during the season - was fantastic.

"It was a title to remember, because of the title but also because of that stability from day one until the last day."

Such dominance means bookmakers have already made Chelsea favourite to win the title again next term, but Mourinho thinks it will be a tough ask to retain it.

"I think our rivals are very strong," the Portuguese said. "Next season they know what they want and we know what they want, too.

"But we also know what we want and they know what we want. I think it will again be a very important season."

OUTFOXING LEICESTER...

ON TARGET: Marian Pahars scored against Leicester in December 2001

SAINTS were this weekend aiming to win at Leicester for the first time since 2007.

Their last victory at the ground now known as the King Power Stadium came on December 1 2007 in a Championship encounter.

Goals from Stern John and Andrew Surman gave George Burley's men a 2-1 victory that was to eventually prove critical.

John fired the visitors into a 32nd minute lead, with Andy King levelling for the Foxes on the stroke of half time.

Surman grabbed a second half winner from the penalty spot.

Fast forward to the following March and John netted the only goal as Nigel Pearson's Saints beat Leicester at St Mary's to complete the double.

A few weeks later and Leicester tumbled into the third division, with Saints beating Sheffield United on the final day to avoid the drop and send the Foxes down.

Ironically, Pearson was to join Leicester as Ian Holloway's successor shortly after.

And 12 months later, in May 2009, he was guiding Leicester to the third tier title while Saints passed them on the way down.

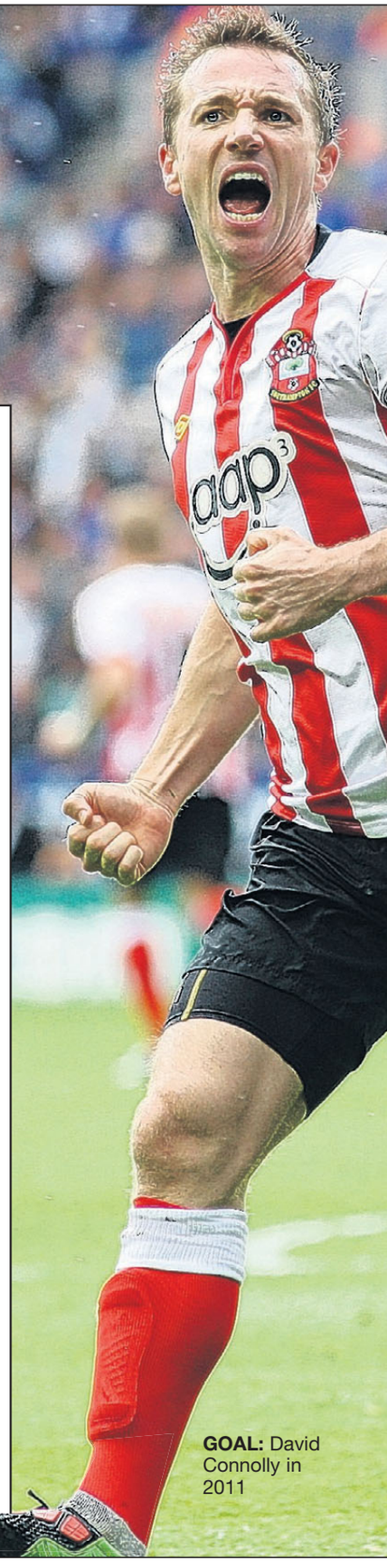
That win in December 2007 remains Saints' only league win at the stadium the Foxes moved to in the early noughties.

They also won an FA Cup fourth round tie in January 2006, Kenwyne Jones scoring a last minute winner.

Saints' last league victory at Leicester's former Filbert Street headquarters had come in December 2001.

That saw Gordon Strachan's men storm to a 4-0 victory with Anders Svensson scoring a brace.

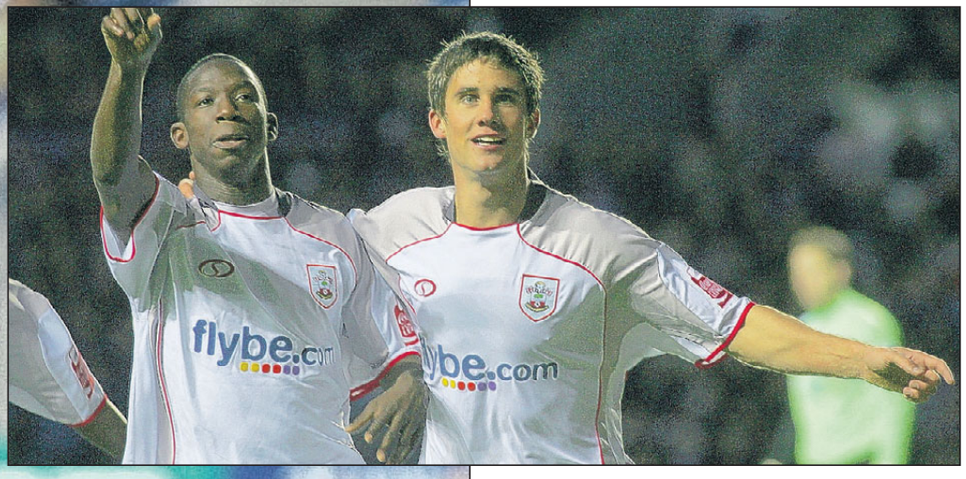
James Beattie and Marian Pahars were also on target against a Leicester side that was to end the season relegated from the top flight.



GOAL: David Connolly in 2011

MESSI? MARADONA? WHO DOES SAINTS BOSS RONALD KOEMAN

Saints Spotlight



FROM THE TOP: Dan Harding scores in 2011, Andrew Surman marks a winner in 2007, Viafara scores in 2006, Kenwyne Jones nets for Saints (bottom left) in a 2006 FA Cup tie, and Stern John reacts after his goal at Leicester in 2007.

Saints loan pair on brink of Wembley

TWO Saints players are on the verge of a Wembley play-off final.

Young defenders Jordan Turnbull and Jack Stephens have been on loan to League 1 promotion chasers Swindon Town for the entire 2014/15 season.

Turnbull, 20, only missed one game during the Wiltshire club's regular league season.

Stephens, 21, appeared in 38 of Town's 46 games.

Both completed the full game as Swindon won 2-1 at Sheffield United in the first leg of their play-off semi final on Thursday night.

And Swindon manager Mark Cooper insisted Nathan Byrne's stoppage-time winner will not change the way they approach the return leg of their Sky Bet League One play-off semi-final.

Defender Byrne capped an impressive display for Cooper's side when he crashed home a low angled shot from outside the penalty area four minutes into stoppage time to make it 2-1.

Swindon, for whom Ben Gladwin saw his 27th-minute penalty saved by home goalkeeper Mark Howard, had fought back to equalise through Wolves loanee Sam Ricketts' thumping header early in the second half after Kieron Freeman had given the Blades a deserved 19th-minute lead.

When asked if he would change his tactics following Byrne's late strike, Cooper said: "Not at all no. We'll play the same way.

"There's things we need to improve like not giving up possession as easily. We know it's only half-time."

Cooper was proud of his players, who have given the Robins an outstanding chance of atoning for three straight previous play-off failures - in 2004, 2010 and 2013.

"For 20 minutes we really struggled to get to grips with Sheffield United's intensity," Cooper added.

"They came out really strong and pressed and the crowd got behind them and we struggled to cope.

"But after that we were outstanding. We played some brilliant football in a real pressure-cooker atmosphere and I'm really proud of the players.

"But it's only half a job done. We're pleased, but we know we've got work to do."

Sheffield United manager Nigel Clough was left furious with referee Darren Bond and cited several key incidents in which he felt the official had made the wrong decision.

Stephens handled Jamie Murphy's early cross and Blades sub Matt Done's 80th-minute effort was ruled out for a perceived foul in the build-up.

"We feel very, very hard done by to come off with a defeat," said Clough.

"We have had four major decisions go against us in the game, but we can't do anything about that."

RATE AS THE BEST PLAYER OF ALL TIME? - SEE PAGES 28-29

Non-league Football

Keating to take reins at Follands

JAY Keating is the new manager of Sydenhams Premier Division outfit Folland Sports.

The former Dorchester Town reserves boss is bringing coaches Sheriff Anjorin and Marc Scrimaglia along the coast with him to Hamble.

Keating's ability to develop younger players was key to him landing the job.

Chairman Adrian Stremel said: "We have interviewed so many potential managers and have been flattered by the number and calibre (of applicants).

"But ultimately Jay stood out as the most refreshing candidate and gives us the best platform moving forwards."

Keating was appointed joint boss of Dorchester Town's second string with Neil Mackie last season, taking over from Dave Kiteley at The Avenue.

He and his coaching staff must now fill the void left by Danny Bowers who vacated the Follands post in January due ill health after six years in charge.

Bowers' right-hand man Dave Lewis took the reins for the remainder of the season but he is taking a season's sabbatical from football.

"Danny and his team of Paul Cotton, Dave Lewis, Tim Middleton, Pete Newcombe and Darren Burdle have turned a struggling Sydenhams Division One side into a major force in the Sydenhams Premier League," said Stremel.

"The club would like to publicly thank the team, especially Danny, for the tremendous effort they have put into the club over the years."

By their own admission Follands dropped "a clanger" by forgetting to present Bowers with a special award for his service to the Planemakers during their end-of-season presentation evening last Saturday.

"When people are so helpful, you take them for granted," admitted secretary Adrian Harris. "Danny has been amazing for this club and we owe him a debt of gratitude. Thanks Danny."

Midfielder Jamie Barron, who is moving on to pastures new at Winchester City, picked up the manager's player-of-the-year award, while Callum Brockway won the fans' vote as spectators' player-of-the-year.

The coveted players' player trophy went to Matt Graham and teenage talent Matt Casey was selected as young player-of-the-year.

BEST SEASON YET

But manager Hill still disappointed not to have 'finished the job'

RICHARD Hill is talking less than 72 hours after the climax to Eastleigh's season; the finest season in their 69 year history.

The Spitfires marked their first ever campaign in non-league's top-flight by securing fourth spot, *writes PAUL McNAMARA.*

A two-legged play-off semi-final defeat by Grimsby Town denied them a historic trip to Wembley, where they would have contested a winner-takes-all duel for a place in the Football League.

The club's manager is still trying to shake off his disappointment at not "finishing off the job".

"I'm a bit better today than I was yesterday. I feel like I've been relegated," he said.

"There are all different sorts of thoughts that have gone through my head."

Hill begins his attempt to put those thoughts in order by reflecting on some of his side's achievements across a compelling last nine months.

"I don't know how many records, or how many firsts, we've achieved this season.

"Biggest crowd (4,126 were inside the Silverlake Stadium to witness February's 4-0 destruction of Macclesfield). Highest finish. Second top goalscorers in the highest level of non-league football."

(Eastleigh scored 87 goals in 46 games, seven more than next best Forest Green and seven fewer than champions Barnet).

There is no escaping the conclusion, however, that his team's 5-1 reverse over the two fixtures with an excellent Grimsby side is occupying Hill's mind, above all else.

Having sealed their play-off berth with victory against Kidderminster on April 25th, the season's last day, there were five days to prepare for the first meeting with Grimsby the following Thursday.

The limited preparation time, says Hill, wasn't a concern.

"We gave the players the Monday off and then had them in on the Tuesday and Wednesday. We'd won five games (in a row) so there wasn't a lot wrong.

"It was just a case of reminding people of their jobs. After going that long (unbeaten) I'd have been foolish to change anything."

"A 2-1 reverse at the Silverlake, in which the manager says his side "didn't play as well as we could have done', quickly adding: "Was that down to us, or because Grimsby did a job on us?" meant that Hill felt he "had to do something different" for the return.

A sleepless Thursday night was used to concoct a plan.

There was, however, scant opportunity for the manager to convey to his players the strategy that he wished to employ in battle on Sunday afternoon at Blundell Park.

"I didn't think there was any point going there and doing the same thing. We had to do something different. I had 20 minutes of Friday morning to say: "This is what I'm looking at. Fellas, you've got to buy into this and see what we're doing.'"

The team travelled to North Lincolnshire on Saturday, restricting their activity to a session in the swimming pool – then, 24 hours later, it was time to go out and follow their boss's instructions.

For half-an-hour it worked a dream.

"I said to the lads (before the game) 'Don't panic, don't rush. You need to be in this game after 70, 80 minutes'.

"I had it in my head how I wanted the game to go. You can actually, if your plans work, manipulate a football match.

"How you want to use your substitutes to make the game go. If it got to 70 minutes (at 0-0), then Grimsby would have been getting edgy.

At that point I was going to expand the game with (pacy attackers) Yemi (Odubade) or Dan Walker. But (after 30 minutes) we started to rush everything and stopped passing to Brian Howard and Jai Reason."

Hill's shift in approach at Grimsby meant a departure from his preferred 4-4-2 formation.

It is a tactic for which he has received some criticism, but the Spitfires' boss wants to explain why he thinks that particular set-up is the way to thrive in this division.

It is a strong-held belief, one that he would revisit later in the interview for emphasis.

Hill was further persuaded that he was going about his business the right way when, during a chance meeting early in the season Richard Money, manager at Cambridge United, told him that the U's had utilised the same method throughout their play-off winning campaign last year.

"Not many teams play with a lot of width. I

HIGHS: Stuart Fleetwood celebrates scoring the third goal against Halifax

TODAY'S FOOTBALL RESULTS – SEE BACK PAGE

Non-league Football

FOR THE SPITFIRES

LOWS: Frustration for Craig McAllister against Barnet

believe this is a '4-4-2' league. We get good scouting reports, but teams are likely to change at any time.

"If we came up against anybody that played three in midfield I didn't want us to be outnumbered in there.

" The players could adapt themselves on the pitch without me having to shout and things breaking down in communication.

"I also didn't think we could afford the luxury of playing Jai Reason off the centre-forward – and I spoke to Jai about that in depth.

"If it doesn't work then you're playing with one centre-forward.

"Your width (in Hill's 4-4-2) comes from your full-backs. We've worked a lot on that in training. Michael Green, Will Evans, Dan Spence, whoever has played as our full-backs, have spent a lot of time in our opponents' half."

Two Grimsby goals in the period leading up to half-time on Sunday forced Hill into something resembling gung-ho changes during the interval.

The manager's respect for his players shines through in his reasoning for wanting to guard against the wheels coming off altogether.

"It mattered to me. I didn't want the lads to be on the end of a right good thumping after the season they'd had.

"I owed that to them as their manager. I didn't want to hang them out to dry. That would have been wrong."

Putting wingers Odubade and Walker, along with Deon Burton, onto the pitch, says Hill, "exposed us in midfield - it shows that playing widemen narrower has an advantage."

2014/2015 is a season that Eastleigh's rapidly swelling support will never forget.

Hill had warned in the days after last term's Conference South title had been secured that it would take his charges time to 'get up to speed' with the greater demands that playing in a higher division would bring.

The Spitfires actually started in stronger vein than anybody could have anticipated.

Hill cites the opening day 3-0 victory at Nuneaton as one of the season's highlights.

He remembers the first home match of the campaign, a 1-0 win over Aldershot in front of the BT Sport television cameras, with a sense of awe.

"The Aldershot game took us all by surprise a little bit. All of a sudden we're on the telly - then the crowd (1,914) that has come in. I remember sitting down and saying to Toddy (Chris Todd, Hill's first-team coach) 'This is proper now'.'

There were some tougher days, however – but no "dark days", Hill jumps in to stress. Defeats at Macclesfield and Wrexham stand out for the 51 year-old as games that were a key part of the learning process.

"I always said we'd get better. At Macclesfield and Wrexham we still had the mentality of the previous season, when we went to try and attack the opposition and win games.

"We were too expansive and open, and that's why we got spanked in those games.

"It was pretty evident to me that we couldn't carry on the season not being in the game after 20 minutes."

Arsenal and Aston Villa are still three weeks away from contesting this term's FA Cup showpiece, the final at Wembley Stadium.

Hill goes all the way back to the competition's fourth qualifying round last October, though, for the day when he felt his team signalled that they had found their feet in their new, more rarefied, company.

A 1-0 win at Kidderminster provided the blueprint for what would follow over the subsequent six months (as well as being especially sweet after the home team's manager, Gary Whild, had declared in the press, pre-match, that he expected his team to win).

"I said to the lads: "Take a look at this".

"We scored an early goal, which we deserved. That gave us something to hang onto. Jai scored a tremendous goal and then we didn't break out of our shape for the whole game.

"Then, I think, the lads thought 'Hang on - if we play like this, we get something.' Sometimes the players need to receive the rewards for their work on the training ground, to show them that we're doing the right things."

Hill refers to a statistic that clearly demonstrates how his team steadily improved during the season.

Eastleigh took 23 points from their first 15 games, with the next 15 matches reaping 25 points.

Steamrollering to the finish line, Hill's side plundered 34 points from their closing 16 fixtures.

Such progress doesn't happen by accident. It is the product of hours of application on the training fields.

"They've all grown as good players together.

Continued on centre pages

Did You Know?

STUART BINGHAM – SEVEN THINGS

STUART Bingham defied the odds to beat Shaun Murphy and win his maiden World Championship title on Monday night.

The 38-year-old, pictured below, is now set to be a household name after joining the winners' board at the Crucible, but here the Sports Pink looks at the things you may not know about Bingham.

1: Bingham did not enter the top 32 in the world rankings until 2006/07 despite turning professional over a decade earlier in 1995.

2: At 38, Bingham became the oldest first-time winner of the World Championship and the third-oldest player in the history of the tournament.

3: The 2011 Australian Goldfields Open was Bingham's first world ranking event win as he came from three frames down to beat Mark Williams 9-8 in the final.

4: Bingham climbed to a career-high ranking of second with his World Championship success.

5: Bingham married Michelle Shabi in Cyprus in 2013, having altered the date and cancelled his stag party to make sure he was available to play in all the tournaments either side of his big day.

6: His nickname is 'Ball-Run', something he has had since his amateur days and which stems from a reputation for having fortune on his side, or 'getting the run of the ball' in matches.

7: Bingham was the last-ever winner of the Premier League Snooker crown after a 7-2 victory over Judd Trump in the 2012 final – the tournament was replaced by the Champion of Champions the following year.

CHERRIES FANS CELEBRATE TITLE – SEE PAGES 32-35

Fellaini cried over Moyes sacking...

MAROUANE Fellaini has admitted he cried when David Moyes was sacked as Manchester United manager.

Fellaini followed Moyes from Everton to Old Trafford two seasons ago when the Scot was chosen to replace Sir Alex Ferguson.

Things did not work out for Moyes though and he was sacked last April, just 10 months into a six-year contract.

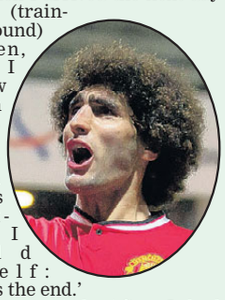
Fellaini grew close to Moyes during their time together at Goodison Park and Old Trafford so the big Belgian was overcome with emotion on the day the Glaswegian was shown the door.

Fellaini, speaking to So Foot magazine, recalled the day that United sacked Moyes after 24 hours of intense speculation that he would be relieved of his duties.

"When he left I was sad," the United midfielder (pictured below) said.

"We had heard things on the radio and TV (about Moyes leaving). It was after a defeat to Everton.

"I did not know if it was true or not. Then I arrived the next day at the (training ground) canteen, and I saw him in his suit, rather than his tracksuit. I told myself: 'This is the end.'



"It was weird. After I had eaten, he summoned to his office and he told me the news. This is football.

"There were tears. This is normal. I am a human being. I worked with him for six years.

"He was not a second father, but almost. He helped me a lot".

Like Moyes, Fellaini struggled to deal with the step up from Everton to United last season.

United spent £27.5million on Fellaini but he failed to score a goal in his first year at the club.

The 27-year-old has hit back at suggestions that he was to blame for United's dour season under Moyes, which ended with the club finishing in seventh place.

"During my first season at Manchester, the team was not performing and I was the scapegoat," Fellaini said.

"Everything was Fellaini's fault.

"If you pay attention to all this (criticism), you sink.

"It destroyed me on every side."

Fellaini was expected to leave Old Trafford last summer, but he has excelled at the club after being given a second chance by Moyes' successor Louis van Gaal.

"I knew it was going to be difficult when he (Van Gaal) arrived because I was the scapegoat last season. So I told myself I had nothing to lose," Fellaini said.

"I had one chat with him at the start of the season on my return from the World Cup. He told me there were a lot of players in my position and it was up to me to prove myself."

Non-league Football

RAISING THE STANDARDS

from page 23

"It was a case of moulding the Football League players we've managed to sign with the other lads – and then finding a solution to mix everything together. We've tried to sustain a good work ethic.

"Our players have raised their standards this season. Within the season I have had to rest a couple of them because they've dropped from a level they've set, purely because tiredness does set in. It's a hard league, relentless, a lot of travelling.

"We always try to be informative on the training ground. We try to make it stimulating, without making it confusing."

The esteem in which Hill holds his players, his fatherly concern for them, comes to the surface again, when he talks about wanting to educate those in his ranks with designs on forging their own coaching careers.

Some keep notes of his training sessions. Others ask for one on one advice.

With that figurehead role comes responsibility. Asked if his players, from whom he accepts only the highest of standards on and off the field, are similarly demanding of their manager, Hill only has to look back as far as the morning after the first-leg play-off defeat to Grimsby for his answer.

"They looked at me on Friday morning to see how I was. That's why I had to come up with something different.

"I had to come up with something that would stimulate them. They always look to me for guidance in times of adversity."

There is praise for his Conference South winning players, men who had developed a wonderful, tight rapport, for the manner in which they welcomed last summer's recruits into their fold.

And for the individuals who arrived from Football League clubs, for coming into their new environment with "no airs and graces and wanting to be part of the group".

Jack Midson (pictured), signed last May from AFC Wimbledon, is held up by Hill as the embodiment of a man who fits his criteria when he goes into the market for fresh blood.

Eastleigh footballers have to be "good players and good people".

"Jack Midson typifies what we want. He's a very good player. I've stifled him a bit at times, asking him to play in different positions. But he's a decent person.

"He's played in midfield and never questioned it, never complained. He's just got on with it and is a good enough player to adapt."

He may still be picking over the bones of the season just gone, but the process of identifying bodies that Hill wants to bring into his dressing room for the next campaign is already underway.

"We've made one or two calls. Good players will get fixed up straight away.

"You've got to make it known that there is an interest in certain players. I've made it known that there's a couple of players that I want, but Football League clubs want them as well.

"We'll work on the couple that I've identified. If it's not to be, then we'll work on what is about."

One nameless player, whose busy agent flagged him up as a potential Eastleigh footballer, will not be part of the Spitfires' future.

"I had an agent who decided to send me a text when I'd just got into the dressing room on Sunday.

"He told me that he had a player that would like to come and join your club and who "would improve your team after that performance."

"He received a few choice words back in reply. I wasn't in the right frame of mind for that, right then. I thought, from an agent, it was pretty disrespectful.

"There's only one person runs this football club. That's the chairman. Not me. Anybody else who thinks they can come round here and do that, they haven't got a chance."

The 'chairman'. The 'future'. Two omnipresent themes around the wider narrative of the modern Eastleigh Football Club.

Reminded of his comment last year, suggesting that chairman (and owner) Stewart Donald (right)

EASTLEIGH FANS AT GRIMSBY FOR PLAY-OFF SEMI-FINAL – SE

Non-league Football

DARDS FOR TEAM

and himself were intending to "create a monster" Hill points to the evidence which suggests that process is well on track.

"Stewart has created the monster. I've just been one of the functioning parts.

"It takes a lot of time, hard work and investment. Stewart has invested a substantial amount in the team, but he has invested a lot of money into the whole club.

"Stewart is the benefactor. He is creating and he puts people in place who are a moving part of making that monster. He has created something pretty special already.

"We just need to make sure that we continue the good work.

"We've had two-and-a-half seasons. I wouldn't count the first half of the season I took over as anything other than disastrous.

"Once we began to sign the next level of player – Toddy, (Dean) Beckwith, Lacey (Alex, on loan from Luton Town) that started to move us in the right direction.

"We then added to that the next year with (Stuart) Fleetwood and (Jamie) Collins. We just have to keep raising it without having a massive turnaround of players."

Hill is a firm advocate for retaining a core of key men from one year to the next, a group that not only brings consistent quality to the team, but which ensures the spirit and solidarity that is such a vital element of this club lives on.

The manager's opinion in that respect is backed up by the experience of Noel Blackwell, Hill's chief scout at the Silverlake.

Blackwell was a defender in the Stevenage Borough team which won three promotions in four years to reach the Conference Premier in 1994.

That meteoric rise, built on sparing adjustments year on year, only ran off course, says Blackwell, when the club decided to tear up their philosophy and start again.

Whatever the manager is thinking, his chairman is kept in the loop. Today, Hill and Donald have already spoken three times on the phone about various issues.

The former has also been chatting with one of his counterparts at a League Two club; a conversation that Hill said brought home to him what a "well-oiled machine" Eastleigh is.

'The chairman has been brilliant. Even more so this season, he's left me to get on with things. He's here more this season. If I need something I speak to him, but he lets me get on and run the football side. We still speak every day.

"A lot of managers moan about their chairman because he's sticking his nose in. "He's hands on, he's this, he's that, he's the other."

"Mine is brilliant. He hasn't stuck his nose in at all. When I tell other managers about my chairman they say: "You don't know how lucky you are." Trust me, I do.'

"Whether you agree with them sticking their nose in or not, they've put their money into this.

"These are wealthy men who have made money by being hands-on and involved.

"Tell them what's going on, rather than hiding anything. I involve my chairman and he lets me get on with it.

'What Stewart has created here isn't just about throwing money at it. It's about working hard at it as well."

A monster cannot hide in the shadows.

His club's soaring profile has put Hill in the spotlight more than at any other time in his managerial career.

There are the 'four or five' articles about manager and team in the local paper each week, regular radio interviews and ongoing scrutiny of performances.

Hill admits that, asked for such frequent comment, he will "say or do something wrong".

Nevertheless – and perhaps surprisingly – Hill has been prepared to embrace BT Sport's hands-on coverage (the Spitfires have been featured live on the channel on five occasions during the season), even the television company's requests to interview him during matches.

"I never thought I'd see myself doing it. But BT

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

EE A SELECTION OF OUR PHOTOGRAPHS ON PAGES 18 & 19

Ancelotti backs Bale to hit form

REAL Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti has backed both Gareth Bale and the rest of his side to hit top form again "very soon" as they look to keep from ending the season empty-handed.

Bale (pictured below) came in for criticism for his performance in the midweek Champions League semi-final first leg against Juventus, with match statistics showing the world's most expensive signing had the fewest touches and made the fewest passes of any Madrid player.

None of the Madrid side covered themselves in glory, though, as the holders were beaten 2-1 in Turin, but Ancelotti has faith it is only a blip for his troops.

He said on Friday: "I haven't read the statistic (about Bale) because it doesn't give me much of a great idea of how the game was. His game in Turin was like that of Real Madrid.

"I don't need to talk with him. He will be back playing well very soon, like Real Madrid."

Madrid fans will be hoping 'very soon' means immediately, because the club's season could be defined in the next six days as they face fourth-placed Valencia in La Liga on Saturday before hosting Juve in the return leg of their European semi-final next Wednesday.

Valencia are arguably the hardest of Madrid's three remaining league matches and if they can win that - and make it eight La Liga victories on the trot - then they would ramp up the pressure on leaders Barcelona.

Barca are currently two points clear of Madrid and host mid-table Real Sociedad this weekend, but in their next fixture the treble-chasing Catalans must go to outgoing champions Atletico Madrid.

That penultimate round of fixtures could end up deciding the title, but it remains to be seen when they will take place with the Spanish football federation suspending all domestic competitions indefinitely from May 16 over a dispute regarding television rights.

Ancelotti (above) believes a solution will be found, though, adding: "I honestly think that it's a matter that will be fixed in the coming days.

"The parties are going to meet and are going to take the right decisions so that the league finishes on the set date."

Non-league Football

'WE HAVE A DUTY TO GIVE BACK'

from page 25

Sport is trying to bring the inside of football into people's homes.

"Those interviews are just giving insight into what is going on in managers' minds. They will leave you alone if you don't want to do it.

"BT Sport pay us to cover our games. I think we do have a duty to give them something back."

That sense of duty, and his chairman's incessant drive to propel Eastleigh onto the wider English football landscape have, though, forced the manager's hand on occasion – a fact he accepts with a measure of equanimity.

Hill did decline a BT Sport request to film his car journey to one of his side's televised fixtures, but "something else they (BT) wanted to film I said no, but the chairman said: "You've got to do it. We're building the brand. I want you to do that."

"The BBC came over to the training ground the other week. I didn't want them over there. The chairman said 'No. I think you should have them over there.'

"He owns the club. He pays the bills. He wants that exposure. So I have to do it. Two or three times this season, I've said to the chairman, "I'm not happy with this".

He told me: "I would like you to do it." When your boss says that, then it generally means you do it!'

Reading a recent jibe which accused him of "playing up to the cameras" irked Hill.

"If I played to the cameras I could have had all the limelight I wanted this season. I could have raised my profile massively.

"What I do in the dressing room and on the side of the pitch, I do.

"When a camera is put there, then people see what it is that I do.

"When you're manager of Eastleigh, you will be in the limelight. Last season I could avoid that.

Building the brand

" Now, coming into the Conference Premier, with all the hype around the club, being on the television in our first home game, building a new stand and the chairman building the brand, you're going to have a lot of focus on you.'

Much of that focus comes from the crowds that now flock to the Spitfires' home ground – not to mention the rapidly growing numbers following the team on the road.

Hill remembers with sharp clarity his first match in the Silverlake dugout.

On September 15th 2012, 506 people watched a 4-2 victory over Maidenhead United (Hill's mind for detail extends to recalling the visiting supporters arriving buoyed by their side's 8-0 trouncing of Truro City a week earlier).

Four figure crowds are now a given for Eastleigh home fixtures.

The 4,000 barrier has been broken twice in the past two months.

As he discusses this phenomenon, Hill has cast aside the lingering disappointment of the previous Sunday.

Now, he is positively effervescent.

"We've picked up some new supporters - and others who used to come three or four times a season are coming to 20 matches a season. It's a good news story.

"We've still got that hard core 250. The ones who were at Concord (Rangers for a game in the 2013/2014 Conference South campaign), Maidstone when the bus had broken down (on the way to an FA Trophy tie last season).

"I think for that 250, who were here all along, they just can't believe what's happened.

"The ones who have started to come more now can appreciate what we've done, but I don't know if they can grasp the magnitude of the achievement to the same extent as that hardcore that have lived it from the start.

"That isn't to disrespect the fans that have started to come more often now, in any way.

"Their support is no less important than the hardcore, no less.

"The next aim is to convert those who came to five or six games this year, into fans who come to 20 matches next season. Then we've got to repeat that the year after.

"Without the support, you're not a football club."

Hill also believes that he has finally won the trust of the majority of those fans.

"I've just noticed over the last six months, there's not the criticism about team selection. There's not the criticism that I had early in the season.

"Early in the season I was getting criticised for small things. In the last four or five months, though, there seems to be an attitude of 'We're not going to win every game. We'll leave it to Richard'.

"They were great to me on Sunday (after the final whistle at Grimsby). I do think there is a greater degree of closeness between me and our supporters – and long may that continue."

Beating Maidenhead in Hill's first match at the helm lifted Eastleigh up to 13th place in the Conference South.

Given the staggering upturn in fortunes that he has masterminded in the period since, it is little wonder that the Eastleigh boss's name has been heavily linked with some prestigious posts elsewhere.

Entering the final year of his contract at the Silverlake, if Hill keeps performing in the manner that he has over more than two-and-a-half years in the Spitfires' hotseat then the speculation and interest concerning his future will gather pace.

There is an acknowledgement from the manager, though, that he has a good home, right now, at which to ply his trade.

"This is a very good job to have. If I wasn't here, then some very high-profile non-league managers would want the job.

"What they'd expect in salary might be a bit different to what it actually is.

"I've heard I'm earning £150,000 a year – which would be nice!

"With this job you have to achieve. I like it here. It's part of a project.

"I'm under as much pressure to produce results as Gary Brabin is going into at Tranmere. The pressure doesn't get any less.

"When you have achieved what we have, then there will be expectation on us next season.

"I'm aware of what comes with this job. People don't see me at 2am going downstairs because I can't sleep, up until four or five in the morning because my head's whirring.

"They haven't seen me over the last ten weeks when I've gone to bed, woken up after two hours, gone downstairs, back to bed, fall asleep, wake up

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Non-league Football

HIGH EXPECTATIONS: Richard Hill

again and then get two hours kip before the alarm goes off.

"I don't expect people to see that, but that's what goes with being manager of Eastleigh.

"If you don't want that, then go and be manager of Witney Town."

If Hill is tired now – and he is looking forward to lying on a beach in Clearwater, Florida, when he takes a short holiday – you needn't dig deep to discover why.

The final month of any football season traditionally sees a string of 'dead-rubber' fixtures being fulfilled across the country, with the customary barb levelled at teams on the wind-down that they are 'playing in their flip-flops'.

Of the 123 league matches that Hill has, so far, overseen as Spitfires boss, only two have had nothing tangible resting on their result – games against Havant & Waterlooville and Boreham Wood after last season's title had been sealed.

That is without considering the four play-off fixtures he has led his team into (Eastleigh also competed in the Conference South play-offs in 2012/2013) and the FA Cup and FA Trophy ties along the way,

When the pressure he has been operating under since day one is outlined to him, Hill is slightly taken aback - although he precedes his response by answering the assertion that the two matches subsequent to last year's championship winning celebrations didn't matter: "To me they mattered, to the players they mattered."

"If somebody told me that (that a manager had been in charge for that number of high-intensity games in such a relatively short space of time) about somebody else, I would think that person must have some mental endurance to be able to do that. No wonder I've got wrinkles.

"It doesn't stop. I've started again now. I signed Yemi (Odubade) while I was on holiday (in summer 2013).

"In the summer last year, I was fortunate enough to have a beautiful holiday. I was in a nice hotel on Miami beach and I set myself up in a room that had Wi-Fi. I had my wife next to me on one side and I was working, phoning and emailing on the other. Nothing will change this year."

Examples of fallen Football League giants that have huffed and puffed to no avail in their attempts to recover their former status are legion.

Grimsby's victory over Eastleigh was their first in a Conference Premier play-off semi-final at the third time of asking.

The Mariners are spending a fifth season operating at this level.

Wrexham will be embarking on their eighth non-league campaign come August.

It took Luton Town five years before they eventually got out of what is a fiendishly tough division last year.

It all leaves Hill a bit baffled when he hears that he is expected to win promotion at his second go.

"All we can do is try and improve,' says the manager, who is encouraged by the more favourable reaction he now receives when he picks up the phone to potential targets.

"I spoke to a couple of players yesterday that I would like to talk to in depth. Now, when I introduce myself as "Richard Hill, manager of Eastleigh," the response is: "Oh, hello." Twelve months ago it was: "Oh, who"? That is quite refreshing.'

The manager prides himself on getting his recruitment 'right'.

Continued on page 32

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Sports Quiz

QUESTION 8: Serena Williams.

1 The Players Championship is taking place this week but on which famous course is the tournament played?

2 Who was named the NBA's Most Valuable Player (MVP) for season 2014-15?

3 James Harris took nine wickets for just 34 runs against Durham earlier this week. Which county does he play for?

4 Christian Benteke, right, has scored 11 goals in his last nine games, but who did Aston Villa sign him from?

5 Which NFL franchise snapped up British running back Jay Ajayi in the recent Draft?

6 Who is the manager of Conference play-off side Grimsby?

7 Which rugby league side plays at the AJ Bell Stadium?

8 How many grand slams has Serena Williams won?

9 Which snooker player is nicknamed the 'Sheriff of Pottingham'?

10 Who is the captain of Glamorgan?

11 How many county championship titles have Durham won?

12 Who scored the winning goal for Everton in the 1995 FA Cup final against Manchester United?

13 What nationality is tennis player Simona Halep (right)?

14 Every winner of golf's US Open between 1982 and 2004 came from one of two countries. The United States and which other?

15 How many of his 67 professional bouts has Wladimir

PAST AND PRESENT SAINTS BOSSES HAVE THEIR

KOEMAN BACKS MESSI IN

... BUT MARADONA GETS POCHETTINO'S VOTE

SAINTS boss Ronald Koeman believes Lionel Messi is superior to Cristiano Ronaldo – because of his Barcelona background!

Former Nou Camp defender Koeman said of the Argentinian: "He makes it look so easy, but it is so difficult.

"He is a great player, maybe the best in the last 20 years."

The Dutchman favours Messi over Ronaldo, in part due to his past in Catalonia

"I am Barcelona," he said.

Messi has still to convince Koeman's predecessor, Mauricio Pochettino, that he is better than Diego Maradona.

Messi put on another scintillating performance in Wednesday's 3-0 Champions League semi-final first-leg defeat of Bayern Munich, managed by his former mentor Pep Guardiola.

But Pochettino – who, like Messi and Maradona, is Argentinian – believes the 1986 World Cup winner remains the greatest.

"For me, it is always Maradona. I am sorry Messi. I love Messi, but for me, it is always Maradona," Pochettino said.

"I was lucky that I played with Diego Maradona. Maybe Maradona is one step up, because he is my idol.

"Messi is this type of player, for me the best in the world today, better than Cristiano Ronaldo and he can decide a game.

"Maradona, for my generation, is always a very special player. When I was a child Maradona was like a god.

"It is difficult in your mind to change your view and say Messi is better or Ronaldo is better, but right now Messi is the best in the world."

On who he would pick in his team, Pochettino said: "Now? Messi, because Maradona is fat."

Looking at Wednesday night's performance, the 43-year-old said: "When Messi wanted to, he decided the game."

Everton boss Roberto Martinez was intrigued by Messi going up against a side led by Guardiola.

"You are running out of words to describe him," Martinez said.

"It was probably the most interesting game that we have seen this year.

"It was two very similar ways of playing the game, two similar philosophies, one team probably with the most significant player in world football in Lionel Messi and the other missing three important players.

"The performance of Messi has given him the edge of being the best player in world football at the moment."

Messi's goals return in the last few seasons is truly phenomenal, putting him right up there with the greatest ever players in world football.

This is his La Liga record with Barcelona in the last five seasons.

	Gm	Gl
2010/11:	31(2)	31
2011/12	36(1)	50
2012/13	28(4)	46
2013/14	29(2)	28
2014/15	34(1)	40
Total	158(10)	195

Including Champions League and Copa Del Rey goals, this is Messi's record ...

	Gm	Gl
2010/11:	46(5))	51
2011/12	51(1)	70
2012/13	41(6)	56
2013/14	37(2))	36
2014/15	50(1)	53
Total	255(15)	266

Mind-boggling.

But Ronaldo's is just as good.

This is his record for Real Madrid over the same period.

Amazingly, he has also netted 195 La Liga goals since the start of 2010/11 – and has played just one game fewer than Messi!

	Gm	Gl
2010/11:	33(2)	40
2011/12	37(1)	46
2012/13	30(4)	34
2013/14	30	31
2014/15	32	42
Total	162(7)	195

Including Champions League and Copa Del Rey goals, this is Ronado's overall record ...

	Gm	Gl
2010/11:	45(2))	47
2011/12	50(1)	58
2012/13	46(4)	50
2013/14	41	48
2014/15	48(2)	54
Total	230(9)	257

And though he has scored just nine goals less than Messi in the same period, he has also made 25 less starts – and six less substitute appearances as well.

Those are the remarkable figures of two of the greatest players the world has ever seen.

AMAZING RECORD: FC Barcelona's Lionel Messi.

SAINTS LEGEND TERRY PAINE PICKS HIS PREMIER

SAY ON WHO IS THE GREATEST OF ALL TIME

BATTLE OF SUPERSTARS

PELE STILL AHEAD OF MODERN-DAY GREATS

THE football world was treated to another stunning performance from Lionel Messi in Barcelona's 3-0 win over Bayern Munich in the Champions League semi-finals on Wednesday night.

The forward's brace moved him on to 53 goals for the season in all competitions.

Former Tottenham and England striker Gary Lineker labelled him as the "greatest", but is he worthy of that tag?

Here, Press Association Sport's Paul Hirst lists his top ten players of all time.

1) PELE (BELOW)

Pele's image may have been tarnished somewhat by the vast number of endorsements he has put his name to since retirement, but on the pitch his achievements are unmatched.

Three World Cup titles - the first when he was just 17 - some 1281 career goals, and many titles in South America, the record-breaking forward is synonymous with football and Brazil.

2) DIEGO MARADONA (ABOVE RIGHT)

Despite his post-retirement troubles – and that infamous handball against England – Maradona still deserves to be regarded as one of the best of all time.

Maradona's skill, dribbling ability and balance were second to none and he showed his leadership skills by captaining his country to victory in the 1986 World Cup.

3) LIONEL MESSI

Just edged into third because of Maradona's World Cup triumph, but in a few years' time he could well be top of the pile here. Just like fellow Argentinian Maradona, he has great vision, balance and skill. He is also the best finisher in the world.

In 2012 he scored a mind-blowing 91 goals.

4) GARRINCHA

The 'little bird' that effortlessly glided across Brazilian pitches in the 1950s and 1960s, while simultaneously causing havoc. Some in Brazil regard the two-time World Cup champion as better than Pele. In a country that has produced its fair share of skilful midfielders, his dribbling skills are regarded as the best.

5) ALBERTO DI STEFANO

The shining star in the Real Madrid team that dominated Spain and Europe in the 1950s and 1960s.

Di Stefano scored more than 300 goals across 11 seasons.

His feat of scoring in five successive European Cup finals is unlikely to be matched.

6) JOHAN CRUYFF

The man synonymous with the Total Football movement in Holland that was the envy of the world. Renowned for his ease on the ball, Cruyff could trick his way past defenders in the blink of an eye.

He also won three successive European Cups with Ajax and made the final of the 1974 World Cup with Holland.

7) CRISTIANO RONALDO (BELOW LEFT)

The ultimate athlete who would undoubtedly be regarded as the best of his generation had it not been for Messi.

The Portuguese combines arrogance with skill, power and an unmatched level of professionalism to win a host of individual awards, as well as silverware for Manchester United and Real Madrid.

8) FRANZ BECKENBAUER

'Der Kaiser' reinvented the way the world looked at football during the 1960s and 1970s.

The German was the first man to operate in a sweeper role, thus helping turn defence into attack.

Blessed with grace, poise and balance, the 1974 World Cup winner oozed class and was a born leader too.

9) FERENC PUSKAS

Part of the 'Mighty Magyars' who put Hungary on the map at the start of the Cold War.

Puskas was a prolific striker who won the Spanish title five years in a row with Real Madrid and also lifted the European Cup three times.

Puskas started the 1954 World Cup final – which Hungary lost to West Germany – despite suffering a hairline fracture to his ankle in the semi-finals.

10) EUSEBIO

Ronaldo's rival for the title of Portugal's greatest player, Eusebio was another prolific front man who won the league with Benfica 11 times and also lifted the European Cup in 1962.

LEAGUE TEAM OF THE SEASON – SEE PAGES 6-7

Sports Quiz

QUESTION 15: Wladimir Klitschko.

Klitschko won?

16 Who scored the most Test centuries out of Michael Atherton, David Gower and Alec Stewart (right)?

17 Which country did Italy beat in the 2006 FIFA World Cup final?

18 Which team have won five of their six Super Bowl appearances?

19 Who were the last team other than Celtic or Rangers to be crowned Scottish champions?

20 Nick Abendanon, left, played for which Premiership club before joining Clermont Auvergne?

21 At which course was the Ryder Cup held in 1997?

22 Dan Carter plays Super Rugby for which franchise?

23 Which NHL team plays their home games at Air Canada Centre?

24 Manchester United signed Patrice Evra from which club in 2006?

25 How many times did Pete Sampras win Wimbledon?

ANSWERS

1 Sawgrass; 2 Stephen Curry; 3 Middlesex; 4 Genk; 5 Miami Dolphins; 6 Paul Hurst; 7 Salford; 8 19; 9 Anthony Hamilton; 10 Jacques Rudolph; 11 Three; 12 Paul Rideout; 13 Romanian; 14 South Africa (Ernie Els and Retief Goosen); 15 64; 16 David Gower (18); 17 France; 18 San Francisco 49ers; 19 Aberdeen (1983); 20 Bath; 21 Valderrama; 22 Crusaders; 23 Toronto Maple Leafs; 24 Monaco; 25 Seven.

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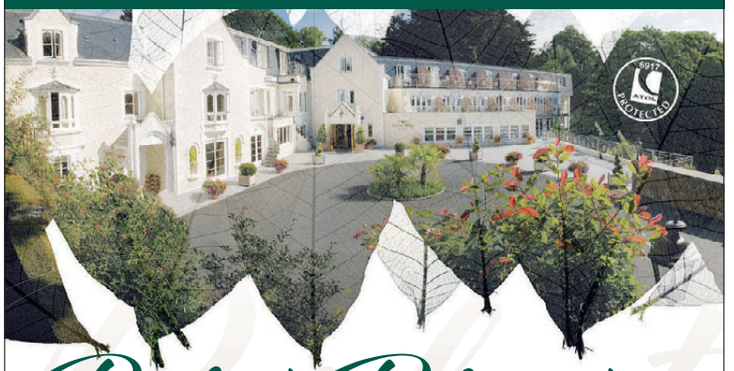

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Hill keen to keep to rules

FROM PAGE 27

He doesn't want to resort to using or abusing the league's 'emergency loan' system (which allows for moves outside of the two transfer windows in case of an injury pile-up).

More than once across the season Hill looked askance as he cast his eye down the list of substitutes on an opposition's team-sheet.

There he would see the names of men purportedly brought in to alleviate an injury crisis.

In reality, these were purchases made entirely with squad strengthening in mind; a clear flouting of the rules.

"Next season, do I take the view: if you can't beat them join them? This year we have followed the rules to the letter. I don't think you'll find many other teams that have.

"Hopefully I don't have to go into the loan market outside the transfer window, because

that will mean that we've done our recruitment properly."

Hill eyes with some bewilderment, though, some of his own and his chairmen's contemporaries, who continue to protest poverty in the face of "big-spending Eastleigh".

"There are two or three managers that I like in this league. Two or three that I tolerate.

"The rest, I think they're there to beat me. They're there to take my job off me.

"When I hear managers saying they can't compete with Eastleigh's budget - that is purely self-preservation. It's rude and it's disrespectful.

"When you hear that from managers of ex-Football League clubs, if I was their chairman I'd be extremely disappointed.

"It's not a budget that wins you football matches. Our players earn wages that are comparable with those in other sides.

CONTINUED ON FACING PAGE

AFC BOURNEMOUTH PROMOTION SPECIAL

PITMAN HAILS CHERRIES'

... And striker eyes his own bit of history

ANTICIPATION: AFC Bournemouth fans on the beach before the open-top bus parade

"I THINK he is a manager who can take this club places."

From County Durham to the Royal Borough of Greenwich, Brett Pitman's journey on the Eddie Howe express has been some ride.

He started Howe's first game at Darlington when Cherries were seven points adrift of safety in League Two in January 2009 and was on the bench as they won the Championship at Charlton last weekend.

The Channel Islander's exploits during his and Howe's two spells at Dean Court have been hugely instrumental in the club's remarkable rise.

And with Cherries having secured promotion to the top flight for the first time, Pitman could be on the threshold of penning a unique chapter in the club's history.

A taste of the big time next season would see Pitman become the first player to feature for the Dorset club in all four divisions of the English leagues.

"It would be very special," said Pitman, Howe's first signing of his second spell when he rejoined Cherries, initially on loan, for £60,000 from Bristol City in November 2012.

"I played in the manager's first two games as caretaker and scored when we beat Wycombe in his first game as permanent boss.

"It has certainly been some journey. If anyone had said back then that we would be in the Premier League six years later, I think the men in the white coats would have taken them away!

"Having worked my way through from the youth team, it would be something else to represent the club in the top flight and at every level.

"We know it is going to be tough but these are the challenges you should relish as a player."

Had it not been for Pitman's contribution during the early years of the Howe era, it could have been a different story for Cherries.

He led the goal charts during the Greatest Escape in 2009 and completed a hat-trick of Dean Court golden boots after finishing as top scorer in the 2010 and 2013 promotion campaigns as Cherries climbed from League 2 to the Championship.

Pitman, who joined Cherries as a 15-year-old, netted 13 goals in 34 appearances in the second flight and became the club's fourth all-time leading league marksmen when he plundered a hat-trick in the 4-0 win over Blackpool in March.

"A lot of players don't get any promotions during their careers so to get three in five years has been amazing," said Pitman.

"I don't think this one is going to sink in for a while. It just seems different to the other two and that is probably because the prize is so big.

"People will probably write us off next season but we have been used to that. We were tipped to go down with the 17-point deduction in 2009 and nobody thought we would climb from fourth-bottom to finish runners-up in 2013.

"Lots of people kept saying we would slip away this season. When I came back, I remember saying I thought the manager would take us places.

"I think it is fair to say he has!"

EDDIE HOWE

SPORTS PINK: FIRST WITH CHERRIES MATCH REPORTS

AFC BOURNEMOUTH PROMOTION SPECIAL

RISE UNDER EDDIE HOWE

Boss in fight to keep crown jewel

BOSS Eddie Howe has stressed the importance of keeping Callum Wilson at Dean Court in the face of mounting speculation surrounding Cherries' star striker.

Wilson has been linked with a host of leading Premier League clubs having taken the Championship by storm during his first season with Cherries.

The 23-year-old spearheaded their promotion by netting 23 goals in all competitions and started all but one league game.

Wilson, who joined Cherries from Coventry, also won international recognition when he came off the bench for England under-21s against France in November.

Just 12 months into a four-year contract after his £2million-plus move, Wilson's exploits saw him linked with Chelsea and Aston Villa during the season.

The *Daily Mirror* this week claimed Tottenham were keen to make Wilson one of their first summer signings with the article suggesting Cherries would "not stand in the way of £12m rated Wilson".

Asked how important it would be to keep Wilson, Howe said: "It is important we keep all our best players. We can't go into the Premier League and lose players and that is one thing I would like to make very clear to everybody.

"We need to keep our best players and build on that to have any chance of winning games at that level so we will be very determined to keep the likes of Callum and the other guys who will always be linked with clubs because they have done very well."

CELEBRATION: Cherries players on the bus (top) and young fans waiting to see them. **INSET:** Jeff Mostyn

Former Cherries star Luther Blissett, who earned a £1m move to AC Milan after finishing as the leading goalscorer in the top flight in 1982-83, has advised Wilson to remain at Dean Court.

Blissett told the Daily Echo: "It sounds as if he wants to make a go of it at Bournemouth. As long as they show faith in him, I think he will be more than happy to stay and prove himself with a group of players he has got to know.

"He will want to do it for them in the Premier League because they have given him the opportunity to show what he has been capable of this season.

"It is an unknown quantity and concept for pretty much every player so will be good to go there with people around you who you know, trust and have been through a few battles with.

"When I went up with Watford, we started the following season with about nine of the same players and went into the division with more confidence and belief because we knew each other.

"That would be a very strong position for him and the club to be in.

They know each other, they have a system they play and all believe in it. It has been attractive to watch and has been very fruitful with the goals they have scored."

CALLUM WILSON

READ THE ADAM RANT COLUMN ON PAGE 9

A love for the game

CONTINUED FROM FACING PAGE

"Managers say things like this leading up to games. If they beat us, you don't hear about it again. If we beat them, then they've got their excuse.

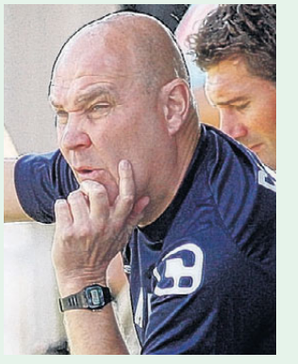
"Lincoln's chairman (Bob Dorrian) said in their programme (when the two clubs met in April) that they can't compete with Eastleigh.

"You're Lincoln City for goodness sake. I bet Lincoln City could compete with Eastleigh if they tried."

That last line is delivered with unmistakable exasperation.

As he moves on to discuss his plans for the forthcoming weekend, however, an impassioned lilt returns to Hill's voice.

He is going to Leicester City's King Power Stadium on Saturday, in the desperate hope that he can get his hands on tickets for him and



his two sons to watch his beloved club take on Southampton.

It is refreshing, a delight even, to hear Hill in the guise of football supporter.

His love for the game is unchecked.

"I'm a football fan. I'd love to go on Saturday and have a few pints before the game, just like our fans do.

"Go down the ground. Sing. Shout. I'd love to do that.

"I see our supporters going to the match with their kids. I've never been able to go to football with my boys.

"On the coach to our games, I see dads walking down the street with his kids. I can only do that three or four times a season with my boys.

I'd love nothing more than to do that this weekend.

"The only problem I do have is that if I do that with my boys every week, it means I'm out of work!"

That, one suspects, is not a predicament that Richard Hill is going to encounter any time soon.

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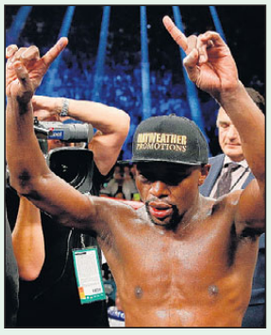


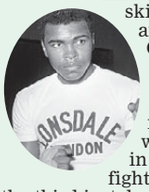
TOP FIVE BOXERS OF ALL TIME

FLOYD Mayweather, pictured above, was being hailed as a genius following his conclusive points victory over Manny Pacquiao in Las Vegas, but he would still struggle to be included on a list of the top five boxers of all time.

Here, the *Sports Pink* lists five more acclaimed fighters than Mayweather.

MUHAMMAD ALI

The finest heavyweight of all time had it all – skill, courage and charisma. Cleverly re-invented himself as his age dulled his reflexes and was involved in the greatest fight of all time, the third instalment of his trilogy against Joe Frazier.



SUGAR RAY ROBINSON

Robinson completed a remarkable record of 200 fights, winning 173, that is scarcely believable when framed against modern boxing. After the first 11 years of his professional career he was 128-1 and held the world welterweight title for five years.

SUGAR RAY LEONARD

A sublime boxer with silky skills and dazzling movement, but also had a fighter's heart that from time to time would see him stand and trade, most notably in his first fight against Roberto Duran.

JOE LOUIS

Reigned as world heavyweight champion from 1937 to 1949 and was the first African American athlete to become a national hero, in part for his role in defeating Nazi favourite Max Schmeling in one round in the most politically charged fight in history.

ROBERTO DURAN

Like several fighters on this list, his career continued too long and his record when facing other members of the 'Fabulous Four' was not great, but as a lightweight he was an unstoppable brawler who would maul and bully his opponents.

AFC BOURNEMOUTH PROMOTION SPECIAL

MOSS'S AMAZING

Keeper puts the dark days behind him

PROMOTION: Mascot Cherry Bear holds the Championship trophy aloft, while fans show their support

"BOURNEMOUTH? No, which proper team do you support?"

The playground was a tough place for ardent Cherries fans like Neil Moss, even during what had until recently been the club's heyday under Harry Redknapp.

Former Saints keeper Moss followed in the footsteps of three generations of Cherries fans who remained steadfast through thick and mostly thin before being snapped up by his boyhood heroes at the age of 12.

And having endured the rollercoaster that is AFC Bournemouth since before he can remember, the fans' favourite of 184 appearances can finally hit back at the incessant barracking.

Life is meant to begin at 40, a milestone Moss passes next week, with the dawning of a new Premier League era for coach and club following an historic Championship title success.

"You would get ridiculed for supporting Bournemouth by kids walking round wearing Man United shirts," recalled Moss.

"At school, everyone would have a go at me and ask 'Why don't you support a big club?' Well, it is for days like these.

"That is why you support your local team, for that one little morsel of a chance that something like this might one day happen.

"Others would ask which big club I supported as well and I can honestly say I never did. It was always Bournemouth for me.

"All the way through the dark times you keep the faith because you're loyal to the town and grew up loving it.

"You never did so thinking you would ever be in the big time, that's for sure.

"It is going to take a bit of time for the reality to sink in and it probably won't until next season's fixtures come out. At the moment, it is all so surreal.

"I feel so proud for everyone, especially the 4-5,000 fans that have been there through everything.

"They must be pinching themselves and it is an unbelievable achievement.

"If you move on in the future and achieve things then you enjoy it but, first and foremost, I am a fan of this club."

And despite the heartache, disharmony, administrations and relegations, Moss insisted he had cherished every second spent at Dean Court.

"The bad times were probably worse for me as a player than a coach," Moss continued.

"It was difficult not knowing whether you were going to get paid the following week with a family to support, always reading in the papers and hearing on the news that the club was going to be wound up.

"Coming through the youth teams to play for the first team at the club you love was incredible and I was lucky that Eddie (Howe) gave me the job I have now.

"That was six years ago but with everything that has happened, it feels more like 25!

"All the hours you put in and the sacrifices you make as a player are magnified when you're on the staff.

"But you'd do it all again three or four times over to replicate the feeling we have now."

NEIL MOSS

CALL SPORTS EDITOR SIMON CARTER ON 023 8042 4515

AFC BOURNEMOUTH PROMOTION SPECIAL

CHERRIES JOURNEY

Howe: We won't pay silly money

BOSS Eddie Howe insists Cherries will avoid any temptation to break the bank as they prepare for their top-flight baptism.

Howe says Cherries will need to be "creative" with their signings and believes experienced Premier League players are likely to be too expensive.

Cherries, who posted a £15m loss in 2013-14, are set to receive around £120m following their promotion. However, despite the influx of funds, Howe says he will continue to be prudent.

Howe said: "If we try to go for Premier League players or players who have experienced the Premier League, we won't be able to afford them.

"The market of players we will be looking in will be different to the majority of Premier League clubs. We are not going to pay silly money. We are going to have to try to be very creative with which players we do sign."

Howe added: "You can see from my track record that the guys who have performed so well for us this season will get an opportunity.

"I don't believe in wholesale changes in the close season and I don't believe in not giving players a chance to show whether they are good enough. Ultimately, they will have to take that opportunity but it was the same from League One to the Championship when we stuck with the majority of the squad.

"Of course, there will be subtle changes. There will be players coming in and leaving but the core will remain the same.

"We will be looking for players who can make our squad and our team better and that would always have been the case regardless of which division we were in.

"Maybe the only thing that has changed is the pool of players who will find us attractive might be larger but we won't be doing anything too differently to what we have always done."

JUBILATION: Eddie Howe with the trophy (top) as cheering fans watch from the beach

● FUTURE star Baily Cargill has been hailed as a roaring success his maiden season in the Cherries first team.

The 19-year-old former AFC Totton loanee had been elevated to the senior squad last summer and while he did not feature in the Championship campaign, proved a revelation in cup competitions.

Cargill did not miss a minute of League Cup victories over Exeter, Northampton, Cardiff and West Brom as Eddie Howe's men progressed to the quarter-final for the first time in the club's history.

And having also played 90 minutes in the last-eight defeat to Liverpool, the youngster started the FA Cup third-round win at Rotherham in January.

Cargill had previously netted on his England under-20s debut in a 2-2 draw with Canada at Dean Court, which he described as "the best feeling I've ever had".

Reflecting on the campaign, Cargill said: "It has been my first season as a professional at Bournemouth and I think it has been pretty impressive.

"I have managed to get some first-team experience and the team have been promoted to the Premier League so it could not have gone much better.

BAILY CARGILL

HAMPSHIRE CRICKET – SEE PAGES 40-41

Did You Know?

OFFICIAL WORLD GOLF RANKING

1 Rory McIlroy (Nirl) .....12.62pts average
2 Jordan Spieth (USA) 9.05
3 Henrik Stenson (Swe) 7.25
4 Bubba Watson (USA) 7.15
5 Jim Furyk (USA) 6.97
6 Justin Rose (Eng) 6.42
7 Jason Day (Aus) 6.37
8 Dustin Johnson (USA) 6.04
9 Adam Scott (Aus) 5.68
10 Sergio Garcia (Spa) 5.58
11 Jimmy Walker (USA) 5.29
12 J.B. Holmes (USA) 5.04
13 Rickie Fowler (USA) 4.66
14 Hideki Matsuyama (Jpn) 4.48
15 Patrick Reed (USA) 4.44
16 Matt Kuchar (USA) 4.40
17 Martin Kaymer (Ger) 4.30
18 Phil Mickelson (USA) 4.17
19 Billy Horschel (USA) 3.84
20 Brooks Koepka (USA) 3.57
21 Victor Dubuisson (Fra) 3.42
22 Kevin Na (Kor) 3.40
23 Lee Westwood (Eng) 3.33
24 Louis Oosthuizen (Rsa) 3.30
25 Bill Haas (USA) 3.29
26 Chris Kirk (USA) 3.26
27 Zach Johnson (USA) 3.25
28 Ryan Palmer (USA) 3.24
29 Hunter Mahan (USA) 3.15
30 Ian Poulter (Eng) 3.13
31 Ryan Moore (USA) 3.11
32 Gary Woodland (USA) 3.09
33 Jamie Donaldson (Wal) 3.07
34 Paul Casey (Eng) 3.02
35 Graeme McDowell (Nirl) 2.89
36 Anirban Lahiri (Ind) 2.88
37 Keegan Bradley (USA) 2.87
38 Danny Willett (Eng) 2.85
39 Charl Schwartzel (Rsa) 2.82
40 Branden Grace (Rsa) 2.77
41 Brandt Snedeker (USA) 2.76

TOP-TEN RANKING: Justin Rose.

42 Bernd Wiesberger (Aut) 2.61
43 Matt Every (USA) 2.58
44 Stephen Gallacher (Sco) 2.55
45 Joost Luiten (Ned) 2.53
46 Brendon Todd (USA) 2.52
47 Thongchai Jaidee (Tha) 2.48
48 Webb Simpson (USA) 2.48
49 Russell Henley (USA) 2.45
50 Tommy Fleetwood (Eng) 2.38
51 Shane Lowry (Irl) 2.34
52 Charley Hoffman (USA) 2.32
53 Marc Warren (Sco) 2.27
54 John Senden (Aus) 2.26
55 Luke Donald (Eng) 2.22
56 Alexander Levy (Fra) 2.21
57 Marc Leishman (Aus) 2.19
58 Cameron Tringale (USA) 2.19
59 Harris English (USA) 2.14
60 Andy Sullivan (Wal) 2.12
61 Jason Dufner (USA) 2.11
62 Tim Clark (Rsa) 2.09
63 George Coetzee (Rsa) 2.08
64 Matt Jones (Aus) 2.08
65 Daniel Berger (USA) 2.07
66 Ben Martin (USA) 2.04
67 Thomas Bjorn (Den) 1.98
68 Mikko Ilonen (Fin) 1.97
69 Miguel Angel Jimenez (Spa) 1.93
70 Francesco Molinari (Ita) 1.92
71 Marcel Siem (Ger) 1.92
72 Kevin Streelman (USA) 1.90
73 Richie Ramsay (Sco) 1.84
74 Graham Delaet (Can) 1.81
75 Ross Fisher (Eng) 1.81
76 Russell Knox (Sco) 1.76
77 Kiradech Aphibarnrat (Tha) 1.74
78 Koumei Oda (Jpn) 1.74
79 Brendon De Jonge 1.73
80 Sang-moon Bae (Kor) 1.71
81 Steve Stricker (USA) 1.70
82 Ernie Els (Rsa) 1.69
83 Nick Watney (USA) 1.68
84 Morgan Hoffmann (USA) 1.67
85 Padraig Harrington (Irl) 1.67
86 Justin Thomas (USA) 1.66
87 Hiroshi Iwata (Jpn) 1.65
88 Shawn Stefani (USA) 1.64
89 Emiliano Grillo (Arg) 1.61
90 Pablo Larrazabal (Spa) 1.60
91 Robert Streb (USA) 1.59
92 Brendan Steele (USA) 1.59
93 Scott Piercy (USA) 1.57
94 Jonas Blixt (Swe) 1.56
95 Angel Cabrera (Arg) 1.55
96 James Hahn (USA) 1.55
97 Kevin Stadler (USA) 1.53
98 Romain Wattel (Fra) 1.51
99 Gary Stal (Fra) 1.51
100 Brian Harman (USA) 1.51

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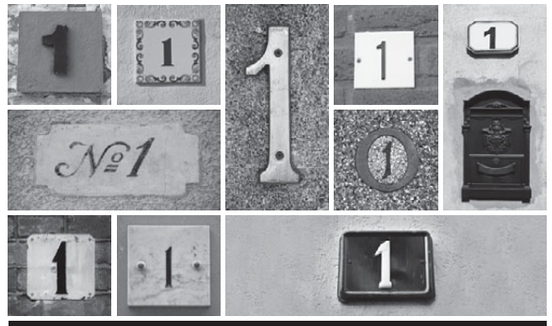

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Local Cricket Spotlight

PREMIER LEAGUE IS

OVERSEAS PLAYER: Ryan Duffield of South Wilts

THE ECB Southern Electric Premier League season is up and running, with Bashley (Rydal), Havant, Lymington and South Wilts wining their opening matches, and Sarisbury Athletic tieing their curtain raiser with Alton.

It's round two today, with South Wilts hosting Lymington – one of the three sides to beat them last season – and St Cross Symondians taking on Ventnor at the pleasant and tree lined Green Jackets Ground on the outskirts of Winchester.

Cricket writer ***MIKE VIMPANY*** previews the summer ahead, with news of all the comings and goings in the ten clubs.

ALTON

Captain: Scott Myers. **Overseas:** Dewayne Bowden (New Zealand)

Alton will be delighted if they repeat their 2014 successes. Ever-improving, they were the surprise packages last season, completely defying the odds and finishing a highest ever third place.

Scott Myers thrived in his first season of captaincy, adding 17 wickets to his 382-run tally. He made 85 in the opening day tie with newly promoted Sarisbury Athletic and is again expected to be the lead bread winner in terms of runs.

Will Phillips, who has been turning out regularly for Durham University, will soon rejoin a squad largely unchanged, with Kiwi left-armer Dewayne Bowden returning for a fourth term. Michael Heffernan and leg-spin bowler Jack Myers are again expected to be prominent, with Julian Ballinger always economical with his off-spin.

BASHLEY (RYDAL)

Captain: Richard Morris. **Overseas:** Tom Andrews (South Australia)

A seven-wicket win at Burridge was the first step towards eradicating the memory of a 2014 season of under-achievement by Bashley (Rydal), whose disappointing sixth placed finish was primarily due to a poor record of only one win in eight 'time pennant' matches.

The arrival of high-rated South Australia left-armer Tom Andrews, from the top Adelaide Grade club Woodville, will boost an already strong spin bowling department and compliment the off-spin talents of Dorset's Sam Thomson, who captured 31 wickets last term. Bashley's pace attack, in comparison, is not as potent. Richard Morris and Nick Baker should shine again, while Michael Porter is among the batsmen keen to improve on last season's modest run haul. Tom Jacques has arrived from Parley and replaced Dan Friedman behind the stumps.

BURRIDGE

Captain: Rick Ankers. **Contract:** Joe Gatting. **Overseas:** Geoff Dods (South Africa)

Burridge look to Hampshire's Joe Gatting to be the lynchpin of their top order batting, but expect Derek Kenway to continue scoring runs, as he did against Bashley last week. Lee Savident's anticipated return will be a boost, but the much travelled all-rounder's fitness may be a concern. Two other Guernsey islanders are due to play at Burridge, who have Cape Town's Geoff Dods back for a third term and pinch-hitter Joe Collings-Wells and Dan Hewitt arrive from Hambledon. Wicketkeeper Jamie Rood is away studying in Cape Town.

HAMPSHIRE ACADEMY

Captain: Andy Gorvin. **Contract:** Tom Alsop/Tom Barber

The 396-run onslaught by the South Wilts juggernaut last week will have sent shock waves though the Academy, who may have to rely on their tried and trusted spin bowlers Mason Crane, Brad Taylor and possibly England Under-19 captain Joe Weatherley to keep opposition batsmen in check. On the evidence of the South Wilts mauling, the pace bowling unit has a lot of work to do, but the Academy batting is strong, with Tom Alsop, skipper Andy Gorvin, the emerging Felix Organ and Weatherley very capable of making big runs, particularly on the Nursery Ground. Ben Duggan and Wiltshire prospect Jake Goodwin also look to catch the eye.

HAVANT

Captain: Stuart Ransley. **Overseas:** Brad Wheal (Durban, South Africa)

Havant have been bridesmaids for the past two seasons and title winners only once in the past five, but will again be South Wilts' primary challengers. The pair meet on May 30 and again on August 1. Havant look stronger, particularly in the pace bowling section with South African teenager Brad Wheal and former Hambledon all-rounder Cameron Prentice sharpening up the attack and nicely complementing a hugely respected spin section. When Ron Gibson returns from Durham University duties, Havant's depth

■ South Wilts face a stern challenge from one of their Wiltshire neighbours, Potterne in the second round of the ECB Royal London national club championship at Bemerton this Sunday (1pm).

Potterne, who knocked Totton & Eling out in the first round, are fast riding through the West of England Premier League pyramid and have four Wiltshire Minor Counties players in their side.

South Wilts have only six of the normal Premier League side in action.

South Wilts: Morton, Abel, Cranch, Wade, Hayward, Hibberd, Pittman, Pittman, Foley, Burton, Draper, Kidd.

■ Basingstoke & North Hants host Burridge at May's Bounty, while Havant – who frequently reach the last 16 – slip across the Sussex county border to play Middleton.

Lymington, who knocked Fawley out in the first round, face the long haul to Ventnor's Steephill bowl.

Several local sides are also in rain delayed Davidstow Village Cup action tomorrow, among them New Forest club Ellingham, who host Bransgore at Pickett Post.

Paultons travel to play Hambledon, having hosted them at Whitemoor Lane today.

STERN CHALLENGE: The South Wilts team

HAMPSHIRE TAKE ON TITLE HOLDERS YORKSHIRE – SEE PAGES 40-41

Local Cricket Spotlight

UP AND RUNNING...

will strengthen, with Harry Hovey looking to shine in the runs column alongside Pete Hopson, Chris Morgan and Ben Walker.

LYMINGTON

Captain: Simon Beetham. **Overseas:** Ben Ashkenazi (Victoria, Australia)

The positive start Lymington made against St Cross Symondians will be put to the test at South Wilts today, but there is a stronger look to Simon Beetham's side. Hampshire seconds wicketkeeper Lewis McManus will be anxious to impose himself, as will Ryan Scott. Dom Hand is capable of making 50s, while Darren Cowley (missing at Bemerton) is a proven match winner, as can Beetham be himself. Australian Ben Ashkenazi will considerably sharpen the pace attack, but Cowley is the only recognised spinner.

SARISBURY ATHLETIC

Captain: David Banks. **Contract:** Basil Akram. **Overseas:** Ryan Burl (Zimbabwe)

Sarisbury's long overdue elevation to the top flight has been riddled with ground problems – sand strewn over winter draining works on the outfield at the pavilion end having rendered Allotment Road unplayable, certainly for the time being. They will play their first three games away and hope return home for Ventnor's visit on May 23.

A tie against Alton was a decent start by a SA side bolstered by the arrival of former South Wilts left-hander Ryan Burl and Ryan Covey (Liphook & Ripsley). Basil Akram will join the duo once Loughborough go down. Sarisbury will be competitive, with skipper Dave Banks and Archie Norris proven Premier cricketers in their BAT days.

SOUTH WILTS

Captain: Tom Morton. **Contract:** Sean Terry. **Overseas:** Ryan Duffield (Western Australia)

Tom Morton is playing things down but South Wilts are recognised as red hot favourites for a fourth straight title. Sean Terry was missing today - he is in the Hampshire squad to play county champions Yorkshire tomorrow – but Western Australia left-arm swing bowler Ryan Duffield is a significant signing. South Wilts have a massive top order, with Eddie Abel, James Hayward and Tom Morton all in good nick. SW have plenty of spin options and James Hibberd to share the new ball with Duffield.

ST CROSS SYMONDIANS

Captain: Richard Taylor. **Overseas:** Michael Pollard (Wellington, New Zealand)

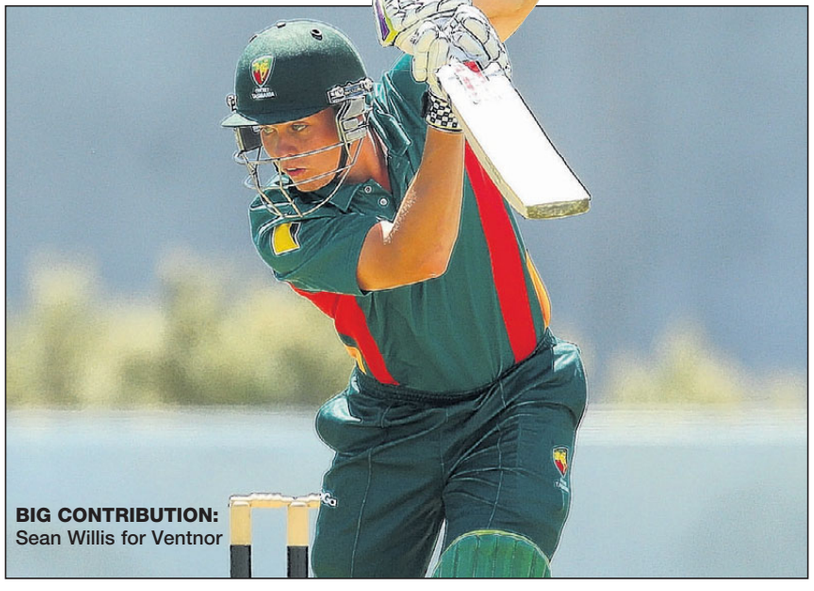
The departure of several front line players has left St Cross at a transitional stage and hoping to cling on to their jealously guarded ECB Premier status with a relatively young side.

The arrival of New Zealander Michael Pollard, delayed by visa problems, and Adam Rouse can't come soon enough for St Cross, whose home match with Ventnor today will be crucial. One-time Buckinghamshire batsman Paul 'Hawkeye' Hawkins, who has previously played for Burridge, will bolster the middle-order. Harry Foyle took four Lymington wickets last week and may be the main bowling threat.

VENTNOR

Captain: Mark Holmes. **Overseas:** Sean Willis (Tasmania)

Losing players of the calibre of Tom Friend and Oli Mills (both to Weybridge), Ian Hilsum (sabbatical) and Chris Ridley (final accountancy examinations) is a severe blow for Ventnor, who also rely on a host of younger players to keep them afloat. Australia Under-19 starlet Sean Willis marked his arrival from Tasmania by making 73 of the 126 Ventnor scored against Havant and may have to make similar contributions each week.



BIG CONTRIBUTION: Sean Willis for Ventnor

JOE GATTING: Key man for Burridge. Picture by Terry Nash

FOLLOW LOCAL CRICKET NEWS AND RESULTS IN THIS WEEK'S DAILY ECHO

HAMPSHIRE CRICKET 2015

INTERVIEWED: Hampshire first team coach Dale Benkenstein

Benkenstein flattered by Irish job link

DALE Benkenstein admits he was flattered to be interviewed for the Ireland coaching job.

Hampshire's coach missed out to former Gloucestershire director of cricket John Bracewell, but does not have any intention of leaving The Ageas Bowl after just one season.

He said: "I would only have been able to do it out of season, [director of cricket] Giles [White] knew about it straight away and it wasn't a dead cert that I'd take the job if I got it.

"I'm very happy here but it was great to know that people have that confidence in me. And it was interesting as I've never been interviewed for a job before.

"Ireland have got a few exciting years ahead of them because there's a pathway for them to become a good side.

"It was probably not the right time for me but I may be able to do some work in the winter with them on a short-term consultancy basis."

Bracewell, meanwhile, will be working with young Hampshire spinners Mason Crane and Brad Taylor later this summer.

"Those two have got real quality and Chalks (director of cricket Giles White) and I could also do with a few hours to pick John's brains," added Benkenstein.

BIGGEST

Hampshire must face champions without Adams and Wheater

Simon Walter
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CRICKET REPORTER

THERE is unlikely to be a bigger test for Hampshire this season than playing away to a full-strength Yorkshire, the county champions, without captain Jimmy Adams and wicket-keeper-batsman Adam Wheater.

Adams has happy memories of Headingley, the ground where he made his maiden first-class hundred for Hampshire, a magnificent 168 not out as the county chased down 404 under Shane Warne in 2006.

With his second child due any day, Adams is likely to be treasuring more precious memories while his Hampshire teammates take on a Yorkshire team bolstered by its returning England internationals.

It means that James Vince, Hampshire's limited-overs captain, will be making his first-class captaincy debut 48 hours after his England debut was abandoned. "At least he'll be fresh for Sunday," smiled Benkenstein, who is hoping for an improvement from Vince (86 run at 17.2) and the rest of his batsmen over the next four days.

"We're playing good cricket but I think we're a bit short of runs," he said. "We've been putting ourselves under pressure by making 200- 250. We're a better batting side than that.

"If we keep putting on big scores you're always in the game or have a good chance of a draw."

After losing their opening game to Sussex, Hampshire have drawn away to Warwickshire and against Nottinghamshire at The Ageas Bowl.

"We're finding our feet," continued Benkenstein. "We've learnt a lot over the last few games and have realised first-hand how high the standard is.

"We've held our own and the good thing is we've had two opportunities to win a game without doing so.

"That gives us food for thought about what balance the side needs but I don't think we're far off.

"I still think we've got players who can get better and when that happens it lifts the whole team.

Yorkshire have not lost an LV County Championship match for more than a year and have not lost at Headingley since April 2013.

Since winning their opening game by ten wickets at Worcester they have, like Hampshire, drawn with Warwickshire and Notts.

They welcome back Jonathan Bairstow, Adam Lyth, Liam Plunkett and Adil Rashid Hampshire's visit, following the England quartet's return from the Caribbean.

"That could be a good thing for us," said Benkenstein. "A lot of them have been away for a long time without playing and we've gained a lot of confidence from the last few games, going pretty much toe-to-toe with some very big teams."

Yorkshire are bigger than most.

"They've got a quality 16," continued Benkenstein. "It's the best team from last year so it would be nice to put them under pressure for the first time in a while.

"They're all a test, every side we play is really strong and you only get a small window of opportunity to win a game. It's about taking it.

"So far we've opened windows

HORSE RACING NEWS AND RACECARDS - SEE PAGE 44

HAMPSHIRE CRICKET 2015

TEST AHEAD

PRECIOUS MEMORIES: Jimmy Adams will be missing for Hampshire's trip to Yorkshire, as will wicket-keeper Adam Wheater (inset)

without nailing it. We've got to continue trying to get in those positions.

"If we can do that against Yorkshire it will give this team a lot of confidence but it will take a hard two days to get us in that position."

Yorkshire's attack is led by Tim Bresnan and Jack Brooks team is also likely to include Benkenstein's former Durham teammate Liam Plunkett.

"Yorkshire's strength is that they cover every base; they've got spin, they've got the quicks and they bat very deep," explained Benkenstein. "I don't think their top order's fantastic but they bat right down to number 11.

"They're the champions because on any surface they've got the skills to hurt you. Their top order, if the wicket does a bit, gives us a chance. But it's going to be a hard game."

Sean Terry will come into the side to replace Adams - and wicketkeeper-batsman Lewis McManus, 20, will make his debut in place of Wheater, who suffered an ankle injury in training yesterday.

"If it had been a one-day game we'd probably have gone for Tom Alsop but you need the better keeper over four days and Lewis is not far off being a top- order batter," said Benkenstein.

Kolpak Fidel Edwards, 33, provides more firepower in the continued absence of overseas signing Jackson Bird, who is hoping to make his debut against Worcestershire on May 31.

It will be the former West Indies star's first first-class match since April 2014.

"We'll see how Fidel pulls up," added Benkenstein. "He looks ok, is keen to play and his record is pretty self explanatory, but there are a few question marks. We'll know more after the game.

"It's a good opportunity for him in his career at the moment and he understands that."

Adams and Wheater are both expected to be available for Friday's T20 opener against Essex at The Ageas Bowl.

Hampshire (from): Carberry, Smith, Vince, Dawson, Terry, Wheater, Ervine, McManus, Berg, Briggs, A Adams, Tomlinson, Edwards, Wheal.

Yorkshire (from): Bairstow (wicketkeeper), Brooks, Bresnan, Gale (captain), Leaning, Lees, Lyth, Patterson, Plunkett, Cheteshwar Pujara, Adil Rashid, Rhodes.

HAMPSHIRE INTERMEDIATE CUP FINAL - SEE PAGE 45

HAMPSHIRE FIXTURES 2015

APRIL

12-15 Sussex (h) Championship: Sussex 444 (D Briggs 4-74) & 164 (J Tomlinson 4-37, D Briggs 3-27), Hampshire 231 (S Ervine 66no, C Wood 48) & 285 (M Carberry 79). Hampshire lost by 79 runs.

19-22 Warwickshire (a) Championship. Hampshire 319 (A Wheater 74, J Adams 53) & 339 (S Ervine 102, M Carberry 81), Warwicks 280 (J Tomlinson 3-53) & 244-5. Match drawn.

26-29 Nottinghamshire (h) Championship. Notts 371 (G Berg 3-88, A Adams 3-93) & 296-4, Hampshire 276 (J Adams 61) & 29-0. Match drawn.

MAY

10-13 Yorkshire (Headingley) CC
15 Essex (h) T20
17-20 Middlesex (h) CC
22 Kent (h) ..... T20 – f
29 Glamorgan (Swalec) ..... T20 – f
31-3 Worcestershire (h) CC

JUNE

4 Middlesex (h) T20
5 Somerset (Taunton) T20
7-10 Sussex (Hove) CC
12 Kent (Canterbury) ..... T20 – f
18 Middlesex (Lord's) ..... T20 – f
19 Sussex (h) ..... T20 – f
21 Somerset (h) CC
26 Essex (Chelmsford) ..... T20 – f
28-1 Middlesex (Lord's) CC

JULY

3 Glamorgan (h) ..... T20 – f
6-9 Worcestershire (New Road) CC
10 Surrey (h) ..... T20 – f
14 Gloucestershire (Cheltenham) T20
17 Sussex (Hove) ..... T20 – f
19-22 Durham (h) CC
23 Somerset (h) ..... T20 – f
27 Sussex (h) ..... 50L - f
30 Kent (Canterbury) ..... 50L - f

AUGUST

1 Middlesex (h) 50L
2 Glamorgan (Swalec) 50L
4 Essex (h) ..... 50L – f
5 Warwickshire (Edgbaston) ..... 50L – f
7-10 Warwickshire (h) CC
17 Lancashire (h) ..... 50L – f
19 Nottinghamshire (Trent Bridge) ..... 50L - f

SEPTEMBER

1-4 Durham (Riverside) LVCC
9-12 Somerset (Taunton) CC
14-17 Yorkshire (h) CC
22-25 Nottinghamshire (Trent Bridge) CC

Key LVCC: LV County Championship T20: Twenty20 50L: Royal London One-Day Cup f: floodlit

Moores appears set for the chop

PETER Moores' future as England coach appears increasingly in peril, pending the expected appointment of Andrew Strauss as the national team's new director of cricket.

The England and Wales Cricket Board issued no comment following reports in the national press on Friday that Moores will be removed once Strauss takes up his position in the coming days.

Moores, pictured below, was in Dublin for the Royal London one-day international against Ireland – a fixture which seems ever more likely to prove the last of his second tenure.

Strauss, expected to be confirmed in his role early next week, pulled out of his scheduled stint as a Sky summariser and pundit for the one-off match at Malahide CC.

The former Test captain has emerged as the clear front-runner to take up the new position which was created when Paul Downton last month moved aside from his job as the ECB's managing director.

Sky explained Strauss' absence from his broadcasting duties with them, when presenter Ian Ward spelled out the open secret to viewers that he is set to rejoin the ECB.

"It is highly likely that he will be the new cricket director, and if that appointment does go ahead it will be announced next week," Ward said on Sky Sports 2.

Should that be confirmed as expected, and result in Moores' departure, the latter's second tenure will have lasted barely a year since major changes were made in the aftermath of England's 2013/14 Ashes whitewash defeat.

In that time, he has overseen just one series victory in any format – against India in Test cricket last summer – and was unable to stop England exiting the World Cup before the knockout stages.

Possible replacements for him include Australians Jason Gillespie and Justin Langer.

The appointment of either would mark a watershed moment for English cricket, recruiting management staff native to their Ashes rivals.

Yorkshire v Hampshire cricket nostalgia

HAMPSHIRE'S BEST

Blazing a trail for Adams & Co ...

HAMPSHIRE are aiming for their first Championship win at Yorkshire since Jimmy Adams inspired a stunning victory in 2006.

Adams will lead his county into action at Headingley this Sunday, for the start of the county's fourth top flight game of 2015.

Hampshire are still searching for their first win following promotion, but here the *Sports Pink* looks back at some of their best first class successes at the Tykes.

County Championship 1973

Yorkshire first innings

*G Boycott c Stephenson b Taylor 73
RG Lumb c Sainsbury b Mottram 0
B Leadbeater c Stephenson b Herman 1
JH Hampshire c Richards b Mottram 20
PJ Sharpe c Stephenson b Mottram 0
CM Old c Greenidge b Herman 28
DL Bairstow lbw b Taylor 0
P Carrick c Greenidge b Herman 12
AG Nicholson not out 14
MK Bore b Sainsbury 7
AL Robinson b Sainsbury 2
Extras (1 b, 2 lb, 7 nb, 1 w) 11
Total (all out, 62 overs) 168
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-15, 3-84, 4-84, 5-120, 6-124, 7-129, 8-148, 9-164, 10-168 (62 ov)
Bowling: Herman 24 8 41 3; Mottram 11 3 45 3; Taylor 22 6 63 2; Sainsbury 5 2 8 2

Hampshire first innings

BA Richards lbw b Old 2
CG Greenidge not out 196
DR Turner c Sharpe b Nicholson 8
*RMC Gilliat lbw b Nicholson 0
RV Lewis c Robinson b Nicholson 12
TE Jesty c Sharpe b Bore 19
PJ Sainsbury c Bairstow b Bore 16
MNS Taylor c Bairstow b Nicholson 50
GR Stephenson b Carrick 24
RS Herman c Sharpe b Bore 2
TJ Mottram lbw b Bore 0
Extras (3 b, 8 lb, 1 w) 12
Total (all out, 114 overs) 341
Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-31, 3-31, 4-65, 5-102, 6-152, 7-265, 8-329, 9-341, 10-341 (114 ov)
Bowling: Old 6 1 17 1; Nicholson 29 5 91 4; Bore 30 11 66 4; Robinson 25 5 95 0; Carrick 23 12 60 1; Leadbeater 1 1 0 0

Yorkshire second innings

*G Boycott b Mottram 30
RG Lumb c Stephenson b Mottram 0
B Leadbeater b Jesty 9
JH Hampshire c Turner b Jesty 84
PJ Sharpe c Gilliat b Jesty 7
DL Bairstow b Herman 21
P Carrick b Sainsbury 29
AG Nicholson b Taylor 15
MK Bore c Stephenson b Sainsbury 35
AL Robinson b Mottram 7
CM Old not out 4
Extras (1 b, 8 lb, 8 nb, 1 w) 18
Total (all out, 105.2 overs) 259
Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-40, 3-45, 4-75, 5-124, 6-190, 7-194, 8-229, 9-247, 10-259 (105.2 ov)
Bowling: Herman 24 8 37 1; Mottram 23.2 5 72 3; Taylor 14 2 42 1; Sainsbury 18 7 49 2; Jesty 26 9 41 3

Hampshire second innings

BA Richards lbw b Nicholson 16
CG Greenidge lbw b Robinson 1
DR Turner st Bairstow b Nicholson 23
*RMC Gilliat not out 33
RV Lewis not out 11
Extras (2 b, 1 lb) 3
Total (3 wickets, 26 overs) 87
Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-36, 3-43
Bowling: Nicholson 10 3 22 2; Bore 8 1 25 0; Robinson 5 1 23 1; Carrick 3 0 14 0
Hampshire won by 7 wickets

Schweppes County Championship 1977

Yorkshire first innings

CWJ Athey b Jesty 11
B Leadbeater c Stephenson b Rice 63
JD Love c Rock b Roberts 18
C Johnson c Stephenson b Roberts 2
K Sharp c Taylor b Rice 16
DL Bairstow b Taylor 0
GB Stevenson c Greenidge b Rice 52
*GA Cope not out 44
MK Bore c Stephenson b Roberts 3
AL Robinson b Roberts 5
S Silvester not out 1
Extras (11 lb, 1 nb, 2 w) 14
Total (9 wickets, innings closed, 100 overs) 229
Fall of wickets: 1-30, 2-89, 3-93, 4-103, 5-113, 6-123, 7-203, 8-211, 9-219
Bowling: Roberts 23 9 39 4; Jesty 11 2 36 1; Rice 40 14 78 3; Taylor 22 7 57 1; Southern 4 0 5 0

Hampshire first innings

CG Greenidge c Athey b Silvester 208
DJ Rock c Love b Robinson 20
DR Turner c Bairstow b Stevenson 13
TE Jesty c Leadbeater b Silveste ..... r 4
*RMC Gilliat c Robinson b Cope 6
NGC Cowley c Bairstow b Stevenson 0
JM Rice c Bairstow b Silvester 12
MNS Taylor c Bore b Silvester 21
GR Stephenson b Stevenson 19
AME Roberts not out 9
JW Southern b Stevenson 0
Extras (13 lb, 7 nb) 20
Total (all out, 85.3 overs) 332
Fall of wickets: 1-62, 2-97, 3-110, 4-141, 5-154, 6-190, 7-304, 8-304, 9-332, 10-332 (85.3 ov)
Bowling: Silvester 25 5 86 4; Stevenson 24.3 9 97 4; Robinson 21 5 75 1; Cope 9 3 31 1; Bore 6 0 23 0

Yorkshire second innings

CWJ Athey c Stephenson b Rice 5
B Leadbeater c Jesty b Roberts 33
JD Love b Roberts 3
C Johnson c Rice b Jesty 28
K Sharp c Jesty b Roberts 36
DL Bairstow c Southern b Taylor 5
GB Stevenson c Stephenson b Roberts 10
*GA Cope c Cowley b Rice 0
MK Bore c Cowley b Rice 5

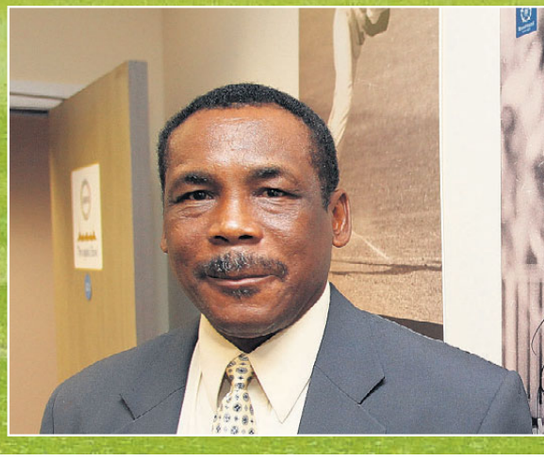
GREAT INNINGS: Jimmy Adams hit an unbeaten century when Hampshire chased over 400 to win in Yorkshire nine years ago.

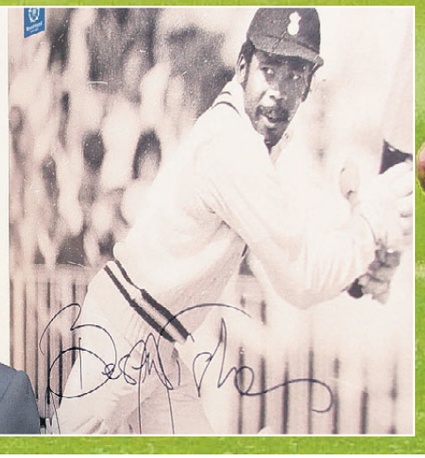
CALL CRICKET WRITER SIMON WALTER ON 023 8042 4482

Yorkshire v Hampshire cricket nostalgia

DAYS IN YORKSHIRE

GREAT INNINGS: West Indian legend Gordon Greenidge, below, scored 196 in Yorkshire in 1973 and a double century four years later.





AL Robinson b Rice 8
S Silvester not out 0
Extras (3 lb, 3 nb) 6
Total (all out, 43.4 overs) 139
Fall of wickets: 1-15, 2-18, 3-49, 4-104, 5-114, 6-118, 7-122, 8-130, 9-134, 10-139 (43.4 ov)
Bowling: Roberts 15 4 47 4; Jesty 7 1 22 1; Rice 16.4 4 48 4; Taylor 5 1 16 1

Hampshire second innings
CG Greenidge not out 15
DJ Rock c Bairstow b Silvester 0
DR Turner c Sharp b Stevenson 10
TE Jesty not out 7
Extras (4 b, 1 nb) 5
Total (2 wickets, 8.4 overs) 37
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-22
Bowling: Silvester 4.4 0 12 1; Stevenson 4 1 20 1
Result Hampshire won by 8 wickets

Britannic Assurance County Championship 1990

Yorkshire first innings
SA Kellett c Gower b Connor 56
*AA Metcalfe c Maru b Connor 22
RJ Blakey c Parks b Shine 17
PE Robinson lbw b Shine 60
D Byas b Shine 29
DL Bairstow c Connor b Turner 37
P Carrick c Maru b Marshall 23
PJ Hartley c Terry b Shine 3
CS Pickles not out 13
D Gough not out 7
Extras (19 lb, 13 nb, 1 w) 33
Total (8 wickets, declared, 99.5 overs) 300
Fall of wickets: 1-56 (Metcalfe), 2-93, 3-130, 4-200, 5-225, 6-259, 7-279, 8-288
Bowling: Marshall 22 7 44 1; Shine 19 2 52 4; Maru 21 9 43 0; Connor 21 2 79 2; Turner 16.5 3 63 1

Hampshire first innings
VP Terry lbw b Pickles 23
CL Smith c Kellett b Hartley 28
DI Gower lbw b Hartley 64
RA Smith b Pickles 15
MD Marshall c Blakey b Carrick 117
*MCJ Nicholas lbw b Fletcher 0
RJ Maru c Bairstow b Gough 25
RJ Parks not out 36
IJ Turner not out 0
Extras (3 b, 19 lb, 6 nb, 1 w) 29
Total (7 wickets, declared, 92.4 overs) 337
Fall of wickets: 1-53, 2-61, 3-99, 4-178, 5-182, 6-281, 7-337
Bowling: Hartley 23 6 68 2; Fletcher 20 5 57 1; Carrick 15.4 6 46 1; Pickles 14 1 64 2; Gough 13 3 67 1; Byas 7 1 13 0

Yorkshire second innings
SA Kellett c sub b Turner 26
*AA Metcalfe c CL Smith b Connor 35
RJ Blakey b Connor 20
PE Robinson b Connor 24
D Byas c +Maru b Connor 0
DL Bairstow lbw b Marshall 9
P Carrick c Gower b Marshall 32
PJ Hartley c Terry b Nicholas 5
CS Pickles not out 57
D Gough c Shine b Marshall 8
SD Fletcher c Gower b Connor 6
Extras (10 b, 11 lb, 7 nb, 1 w) 29
Total (all out, 72.5 overs) 251
Fall of wickets: 1-45, 2-84, 3-100, 4-100, 5-113, 6-138, 7-153, 8-186, 9-230, 10-251 (72.5 ov)
Bowling: Marshall 22 5 51 3; Shine 8 0 50 0; Connor 27.5 3 96 5; Turner 9 5 19 1; Nicholas 6 1 14 1

Hampshire second innings
VP Terry b Fletcher 18
CL Smith c Bairstow b Gough 58
DI Gower c Robinson b Gough 33
RA Smith not out 51
MD Marshall b Gough 28
*MCJ Nicholas c Gough b Hartley 15
RJ Parks not out 1
Extras (11 lb) 11
Total (5 wickets, 45.5 overs) 215
Fall of wickets: 1-37, 2-103, 3-113, 4-181, 5-206
Bowling: Hartley 15 3 52 1; Fletcher 14 1 66 1; Pickles 4 0 25 0; Gough 12.5 1 61 3
Hampshire won by 5 wickets

LV County Championship 2006 (Division 1)

Yorkshire first innings
MJ Wood lbw b Taylor 9
MP Vaughan c Pothas b Taylor 1
A McGrath c Pothas b Bruce 0
MJ Lumb c Warne b Thornely 67
DS Lehmann run out 37
*C White c Lamb b Warne 57
GL Brophy c Adams b Warne 6
TT Bresnan lbw b Warne 91
RKJ Dawson c Pothas b Logan 7
JN Gillespie c Pothas b Warne 44
GJ Kruis not out 0
Extras (6 b, 9 lb, 10 nb, 6 w) 31
Total (all out, 115.1 overs) 350
Fall of wickets: 1-8 (Vaughan), 2-9 (McGrath), 3-13 (Wood), 4-55 (Lehmann), 5-175 (Lumb), 6-187 (White), 7-192 (Brophy), 8-205 (Dawson), 9-349 (Gillespie), 10-350 (Bresnan)
Bowling: Bruce 20 3 55 1; Taylor 22 4 64 2; Mascarenhas 17 4 51 0; Logan 15 1 58 1; Warne 28.1 8 68 4; Thornely 7 1 14 1; Lamb 3 0 13 0; Adams 2 0 8 0; Carberry 1 0 4 0

Hampshire first innings
JHK Adams c Brophy b Kruis 30
MA Carberry c Brophy b Gillespie 52
JP Crawley b Kruis 54
DJ Thornely c Brophy b Bresnan 76
GA Lamb lbw b McGrath 0
N Pothas c Wood b Bresnan 10
AD Mascarenhas b Gillespie 3
*SK Warne c Wood b Bresnan 0
RJ Logan b Bresnan 0
JTA Bruce c Brophy b Kruis 0
BV Taylor not out 0
Extras (1 b, 22 nb) 23
Total (all out, 92 overs) 248
Fall of wickets: 1-60 (Adams), 2-109 (Carberry), 3-188 (Crawley), 4-189 (Lamb), 5-219 (Pothas), 6-226 (Mascarenhas), 7-227 (Warne), 8-227 (Logan), 9-246 (Bruce), 10-248 (Thornely)
Bowling: Gillespie 19 6 39 2; Kruis 20 3 71 3; Bresnan 19 3 36 4; Dawson 18 3 41 0; Lehmann 6 0 13 0; McGrath 10 0 47 1

Yorkshire second innings
MJ Wood c Pothas b Bruce 0
MP Vaughan b Mascarenhas 56
A McGrath c Logan b Warne 127
MJ Lumb c Thornely b Mascarenhas 5
DS Lehmann c Lamb b Warne 18
*C White b Thornely 35
GL Brophy c Pothas b Warne 13
TT Bresnan not out 14
RKJ Dawson c Taylor b Thornely 5
JN Gillespie not out 2
Extras (6 b, 7 lb, 6 nb, 7 w) 26
Total (8 wickets, declared, 82 overs) 301
Fall of wickets: 1-0 (Wood), 2-128 (Vaughan), 3-136 (Lumb), 4-173 (Lehmann), 5-253 (White), 6-272 (Brophy), 7-277 (McGrath), 8-283 (Dawson)
Bowling: Bruce 12 1 60 1; Taylor 14 2 42 0; Logan 5 0 22 0; Warne 25 1 83 3; Mascarenhas 14 1 47 2; Thornely 12 1 34 2

Hampshire second innings
JHK Adams not out 168
MA Carberry lbw b McGrath 62
JP Crawley c Wood b McGrath 19
DJ Thornely c Kruis b Lehmann 71
AD Mascarenhas b Kruis 2
N Pothas st Brophy b Lehmann 23
GA Lamb not out 32
Extras (3 b, 6 lb, 16 nb, 2 w) 27
Total (5 wickets, 111.2 overs) 404
Fall of wickets: 1-133 (Carberry), 2-164 (Crawley), 3-301 (Thornely), 4-309 (Mascarenhas), 5-357 (Pothas)
Bowling: Gillespie 24 6 66 0; Kruis 21 3 75 1; Bresnan 18.2 2 74 0; Lehmann 16 0 70 2; Dawson 14 3 37 0; McGrath 18 0 73 2
Hampshire won by 5 wickets

THE PINK – BEST FOR HAMPSHIRE CRICKET NOSTALGIA

IPL stint will help Morgan, says KP

KEVIN Pietersen believes Eoin Morgan is getting a greater benefit from playing in the Indian Premier League than he would by starting the season on England duty.

After captaining England at the World Cup, Morgan headed to India to play for the Sunrisers Hyderabad.

He shone this week with a 28-ball innings of 63 against the Rajasthan Royals in Mumbai, comfortably his most impressive effort of the campaign.

England were without Morgan, pictured below, when they faced Ireland in Malahide yesterday, but former Hampshire batsman Pietersen believes the national team can cash in on a longer-term basis if the left-hander bats himself into form.

"Everybody needs runs. For him this is brilliant; for England this is even better – he's their captain," Pietersen said.

"You've got guys who play like this against England – you saw it at the World Cup.

"You've now got players – and he's one of the players that England have – who can hit sixes and take teams apart.'"

Morgan had a terrible World Cup. Appointed captain shortly before the tournament began in a controversial move that saw Alastair Cook dropped, Morgan could not shake off poor batting form and also saw his side fail to go beyond the group stage.

Pietersen added: "This might sound controversial and I'm not one to mix my words, but he's playing in the IPL and he's playing against (Shane) Watson, (Chris) Morris, (Pravin) Tambe, and he's surrounded by (Sunrisers bowling coach Muttiah) Muralitharan, VVS (Laxman, team mentor), he's got all these blokes around him – superstars.

"This is benefiting his game. I know he's under a lot of pressure because he's not playing in Malahide, but I prefer seeing Eoin Morgan doing this in the IPL than playing in Malahide."

Horse Racing

BELMOUNT TO LAND LUDLOW BLOW

BELMOUNT can make his fencing debut a winning one in the totepool Bet On All UK Racing Novices' Limited Handicap Chase at Ludlow.

The Nigel Twiston-Davies-trained six-year-old is a young horse of some promise and has shaped as the type we will not see the best of until he goes over larger obstacles.

A strong stayer, the Westerner gelding won over three and a quarter miles on heavy ground at Warwick in the middle of March and could be rated better than his third under a penalty when attempting to follow up at Ffos Las.

A horse with plenty of scope, he will get every yard of this three miles and any rain will only help his chance.

Hopes are high for a hat-trick of wins for Frozen Over as he takes his chance in the Welsh Guards Association Handicap Hurdle.

He has not been winning by far, and, as a result, is only 8lb higher then when starting his hot streak at Taunton.

The Chris Down-trained seven-year-old followed up on ground plenty quick enough at Wincanton and in his current mood – and what he has shown in the past from similar marks – he is by no means handicapped out of it.

Arkaim was pencilled in for a break after his latest win but loves the Shropshire venue and has been found another opportunity in the mytotepool.com Handicap Chase.

The consistent eight-year-old is two from three here and the fact he runs is a tip in itself.

Canarbino Girl, who was only beaten a neck at Towcester last time, has evidently found her appetite for racing again and is worthy of support in the Stevie Fisher Trust Handicap Hurdle at Plumpton.

Ballysax scorer Success Days wins the vote in an open-looking Derrinstown Stud Derby Trial at Leopardstown, while Massini's Trap is a sporting pick in the Ladbrokes Ireland Handicap Hurdle at Killarney.

The James Nash-trained six-year-old is a maiden over hurdles but has shown promise in placing more than once and was a little unfortunate when brought down at Downpatrick in March.

A versatile sort, he had a sharpener on the level last month and has each-way claims.

SELECTIONS

KILLARNEY: 2.20 Karalee, 2.50 Hes Our Robin, 3.20 Whiteout, 3.50 Massini's Trap, 4.20 Macnicholson, 4.55 Corporate Box, 5.25 Finian's Rainbow, 5.55 Bobo Mac.
LEOPARDSTOWN: 2.10 Ard San Aer, 2.40 Sruthan, 3.10 Off Limits, 3.40 Success Days, 4.10 Beau Satchel, 4.40 Theophilus, 5.10 Knocknagree.
LUDLOW: 2.15 Quebec, 2.45 BELMOUNT (NAP), 3.15 Double Silver, 3.45 Sword Of The Lord, 4.15 Arkaim, 4.45 Ballykan, 5.15 Rather Be.
PLUMPTON: 2.00 Ryeolliean, 2.30 Canarbino Girl, 3.00 Charming Lad, 3.30 Warrant Officer, 4.00 Jayo Time, 4.30 Vikekhal, 5.00 Ilewin Geez.
DOUBLE: Belmount and Frozen Over.

SAM TWISTON-DAVIES: Saddles 4-1 shot Belmont in the 2.45 at Ludlow.

LUDLOW — Sunday's runners

Going: Good-Good to Soft in places

2.15 GWYN THOMAS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION NOVICES' HURDLE (CLASS 4). £6,000 added 4YO PLUS 2m Penalty Value £3,899.

1 611- **QUEBEC (28)** Robert Stephens 4 11 8 ..... **Mr C Gethings (7)**
2 R2316- **GUARD OF HONOUR (IRE) (18) (D)** Miss R Curtis 4 11 2 ..... **T Scudamore**
3 445/ **ALONGTHEWATCHTOWER (IRE) (708)** F Brennan 7 11 0 **J Banks (3)**
4 050/2- **ARE THEY YOUR OWN (IRE) (19)** F O'Brien 7 11 0 .... **N Slatter (7)**
5 **GAMBOL (FR) (F245)** I Williams 5 11 0 ..... **Will Kennedy**
6 **GENERAL BROOK (IRE) (F22)** J G O'Shea 5 11 0 ..... **D Crosse**
7 553- **MILESTONE (IRE) (214)** E Williams 5 11 0 ..... **P Moloney**
8 **NUMBER ONE LONDON (IRE) (F210)** T Vaughan 5 11 0 . **R Johnson**

BETTING: 7-4 Quebec, 9-2 Gambol, 6-1 Number One London, Are They Your Own, 13-2 Guard Of Honour, 12-1 General Brook, Milestone, 20-1 Alongthewatchtower.

2.45 TOTEPOOL BET ON ALL UK RACING NOVICES' LIMITED HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS 3). £12,000 added 5YO PLUS 3m Penalty Value £7,798.

1 0P253- **CALL ME VIC (IRE) (62) (D)(BF)** T R George 8 11 8 ..... **P Brennan**
2 PF/03- **LORD GRANTHAM (IRE) (38)** H Daly 8 11 6 ..... **J Greenall**
3 F/013- **HOWABOUTNOW (IRE) (42) (D)** I Williams 8 11 4 ..... **Will Kennedy**
4 44213- **BELMOUNT (IRE) (45) (D)** N Twiston-Davies 6 11 0 **S Twiston-Davies**
5 U332-3 **STILL BELIEVING (IRE) (8) (C)(D)** E Williams 7 10 13 ..... **A Wedge**
6 /5241- **GREENLAW (44)** C Longsdon 9 10 10 ..... **N Fehily**
7 34/6-U **MISS TILLY OSCAR (IRE) (9) (D)** S Flook 9 10 3 ..... **B Poste (3)**

BETTING: 5-2 Greenlaw, 7-2 Howaboutnow, 4-1 Belmount, 9-2 Call Me Vic, 7-1 Still Believing, 8-1 Lord Grantham, 50-1 Miss Tilly Oscar.

3.15 TOTEPOOL RACING'S BIGGEST SUPPORTER HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS 3). £12,000 added 4YO PLUS 2m 5f Penalty Value £7,798.

1 11235- **BONNE FEE (24)** K Bailey 8 11 12 ..... **D Bass**
2 61300- **ACERTAIN CIRCUS (36)** Mrs P Sly 5 11 11 ..... **Kielan Woods**
3 31P35- **BROWNVILLE (41) (C)(D)** N Twiston-Davies 6 11 9 **S Twiston-Davies**
4 21U32- **KALIMANTAN (IRE) (F90) (BF)** T Vaughan 5 11 0 ..... **R Johnson**
5 41/F1- **DOUBLE SILVER (52) (CD)** F O'Brien 8 11 0 ..... **P Brennan**
6 01/1U- **ROMEO IS BLEEDING (IRE) (34)** D Rees 9 10 11 ..... **A Wedge**
7 31350- **LAVA LAMP (GER) (175) (C)** E Williams 8 10 10 ..... **P Moloney**
8 6455-4 **SOMEMOTHERSDOHAVEM (6)** Miss V Williams 6 10 5 . **L Treadwell**

BETTING: 10-3 Bonne Fee, 4-1 Double Silver, Kalimantan, 6-1 Somemothersdohavem, 7-1 Brownville, 8-1 Acertain Circus, 10-1 Lava Lamp, 14-1 Romeo Is Bleeding.

3.45 WELSH GUARDS ASSOCIATION HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS 4). £10,000 added 4YO PLUS 2m Penalty Value £6,498.

1 2122-1 **MR LANDO (6) (D)** Mrs A Batchelor 6 12 1(7ex) .... **Mr S Hanson (7)**
2 21004/ **BATTLECAT (731)** E Williams 8 11 12 ..... **A Wedge**
3 5001- **TIDESTREAM (69) (D)** T Vaughan 5 11 7 ..... **R Johnson**
4 34443- **SWORD OF THE LORD (18)** N Twiston-Davies 5 11 7 . . **S Twiston-Davies**
5 640/0- **RED SKIPPER (IRE) (F13) (CD)** J G O'Shea 10 11 6 ..... **D Crosse**
6 50P11- **FROZEN OVER (21) (D)** C Down 7 11 4 ..... **J M Davies**
7 1P0F2- **FAIRY ALISHA (18) (D)** T Wall 7 11 3 ..... **J Wall (7)**
8 /52P5- **CANDELITA (19) (D)** M Sheppard 8 11 0 ..... **Mr S Sheppard (7)**

BETTING: 13-8 Mr Lando, 10-3 Frozen Over, 11-2 Tidestream, 13-2 Sword of The Lord, 8-1 Fairy Alisha, 16-1 Battlecat, Candelita, 25-1 Red Skipper.

4.15 MYTOTEPOOL.COM HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS 3). £20,000 added 5YO PLUS 2m Penalty Value £12,996.

1 260F-2 **MY BROTHER SYLVEST (6) (D)** D Pipe 9 11 12 ..... **T Scudamore**
2 141U1- **ANOTHER FLUTTER (IRE) (36) (CD)** M Sheppard 11 11 10 ..... **Mr S Sheppard (7)**
3 12341- **ARKAIM (52) (CD)** Mrs P Sly 7 11 9 ..... **Kielan Woods**
4 5231F- **SIR VALENTINO (FR) (98) (CD)** T R George 6 11 5 ..... **P Brennan**
5 20111- **STORM OF SWORDS (IRE) (51) (D)** D Skelton 7 11 5 .... **H Skelton**
6 16543- **BULLET STREET (IRE) (42) (C)(D)** E Williams 7 11 0 ..... **P Moloney**
7 2F015- **LIMPOPO TOM (IRE) (16) (CD)** D Rees 8 11 0 ..... **D O'Regan**
8 15243- **UN ANJOU (FR) (21) (D)** David Dennis 7 10 12 ..... **N Fehily**
9 /563F- **SONOFAGUN (FR) (21) (CD)** I Williams 9 10 8 ..... **Will Kennedy**
10 42U2-2 **EASILY PLEASED (IRE) (5) (D)** M Hill 9 10 7 ..... **R Johnson**

BETTING: 4-1 Storm Of Swords, 5-1 My Brother Sylvest, 6-1 Sir Valentino, 7-1 Another Flutter, Arkaim, 8-1 Easily Pleased, 10-1 Limpopo Tom, Un Anjou, 12-1 others.

4.45 TANNERS WINES NOVICES' HURDLE (CLASS 4). £6,000 added 4YO PLUS 2m 5f Penalty Value £3,899.

1 /2321- **BALLYKAN (60)** N Twiston-Davies 5 11 5 ..... **S Twiston-Davies**
2 4041-4 **FUTURE SECURITY (IRE) (9) (CD)** A Middleton 6 11 5 . . **P Brennan**
3 12436- **BABENY BRIDGE (IRE) (26)** N Williams 6 10 12 .... **Lizzie Kelly (7)**
4 4050- **BERTIE LUGG (34)** A Price 7 10 12 ..... **R T Dunne**
5 2P556/ **MR MOSS (IRE) (526)** E Williams 10 10 12 ..... **P Moloney**
6 050- **LAUGHINGALLTHEWAY (39)** M Keighley 4 10 7 ..... **A Tinkler**
7 /P40-5 **HIGHLAND LIFE (9)** S Flook 5 10 5 ..... **B Poste (3)**
8 2/643- **PROMANCO (52)** C Longsdon 6 10 5 ..... **R Johnson**

BETTING: 2-1 Ballykan, 5-2 Future Security, 11-4 Promanco, 5-1 Mr Moss, 20-1 Babeny Bridge, 25-1 Laughingallltheway, 50-1 Highland Life, Bertie Lugg.

5.15 ANN ESP MEMORIAL 'NEWCOMERS' STANDARD OPEN NH FLAT RACE (CLASS 5). £5,000 added 4 to 6YO 2m Penalty Value £3,249.

1 **ASCOTDEUX NELLERIE (FR)** K Bailey 5 11 4 ..... **D Bass**
2 **BATTLE MASTER** M Mullineaux 5 11 4 ..... **B Poste (3)**
3 **DEFIANT DAZZLER (IRE)** Lady S Brooke 6 11 4 . . **Miss L Brooke (7)**
4 **RENFREW (IRE)** T Vaughan 5 11 4 ..... **R Johnson**
5 **VON TRAPPE (IRE)** A Phillips 6 11 4 ..... **A Wedge**
6 **RATHER BE (IRE)** N Henderson 4 11 0 ..... **A Tinkler**
7 **ROUND ROBIN (IRE)** H Daly 4 11 0 ..... **T J O'Brien**
8 **TEME TRIXIE** A Price 5 10 11 ..... **R T Dunne**
9 **HANDPICKED** H Daly 4 10 7 ..... **J Greenall**

BETTING: 11-8 Rather Be, 4-1 Renfrew, 5-1 Ascotdeux Nellerie, 8-1 Round Robin, 10-1 Handpicked, 12-1 Battle Master, 16-1 Teme Trixie, 33-1 Von Trappe, Defiant Dazzler.

PLUMPTON — Sunday's runners

Going: Good

2.00 BAKER OF DELICIOUS HAPPINESS PUDDINGFAIRY.CO.UK MAIDEN HURDLE (CLASS 5). £4,300 added 4YO PLUS 2m Penalty Value £2,794.

101 **MAC'S SUPERSTAR (FR) (F265)** A Coogan 5 11 0 ..... **A P Cawley**
102 **MODERN SOCIETY (F670)** A Reid 5 11 0 ..... **B J Powell**
103 26F42- **RONALDINHO (IRE) (23)** A King 5 11 0 ..... **W Hutchinson**
104 40000- **UP FOUR IT (IRE) (35)** J Poulton 7 11 0 ..... **J McGrath (3)**
105 43- **ASKNOTWHAT (IRE) (54)** D Bridgwater 4 10 10 ..... **T Cannon**
106 3422- **RYEOLLIEAN (F6)** G L Moore 4 10 10 ..... **N Scholfield**
107 35- **SEBS SENSEI (IRE) (21)** M Hoad 4 10 10 ..... **Mr D Burchell (7)**

BETTING: 7-4 Asknotwhat, 2-1 Ryeolliean, 5-2 Ronaldinho, 12-1 Mac's Superstar, 16-1 Sebs Sensei, 66-1 Up Four It, Modern Society.

2.30 STEVIE FISHER TRUST HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS 5). £4,500 added 4YO PLUS 3m 1f 110yds Penalty Value £2,924.

201 04214- **BRIDAL SUITE (IRE) (19)** C Mann 6 11 12 ..... **T Dowling (10)**
202 0436-0 **DEXTER BENJAMIN (IRE) (9)** N Gifford 6 11 11 ..... **L Aspell**
203 26335- **THE KINGS ASSASSIN (IRE) (218) (BF)** C Gordon 7 11 10 **T Cannon**
204 24411- **FLUGZEUG (16) (CD)** J W Mullins 7 11 9 ..... **Kevin Jones (7)**
205 450- **CONSERVE (IRE) (F19)** N King 5 11 8 ..... **T Whelan**
206 32330- **SPANISH FORK (IRE) (189)** Miss S Weet 6 11 5 ..... **M Goldstein**
207 06603- **PETITE FANTASIE (50)** M Gillard 6 11 3 ..... **N Scholfield**
208 0P66-2 **CANARBINO GIRL (10)** Mrs C Keevil 8 10 10 ..... **James Best**
209 1/PPP- **BAND OF THUNDER (134)** M Tompkins 7 10 9 ..... **T Garner (3)**
210 6303-2 **LORD ALDERVALE (IRE) (8)** L Dace 8 10 2 ..... **G Gorman (7)**
211 532U0- **MACCABEES (23)** Mrs L Jewell 6 10 2 ..... **T Cheesman (7)**
212 5P405/ **CURRAGH DANCER (FR) (385) (C)** Miss M Bryant 12 10 0 . . **Miss B Hampson (7)**
213 000- **I'M LUCY (IRE) (34)** Mrs L Jewell 4 10 0 ..... **G Derwin (7)**

BETTING: 9-4 Flugzeug, 4-1 The Kings Assassin, 7-1 Bridal Suite, Canarbino Girl, 10-1 Lord Aldervale, 12-1 Petite Fantasie, Spanish Fork, 14-1 Conserve, Dexter Benjamin, 16-1 others.

3.00 SOPHIE MELLETT 18TH BIRTHDAY HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS 5). £5,500 added 5YO PLUS 3m 2f Penalty Value £3,574.

301 3121-2 **CHARMING LAD (IRE) (9) (CD)(BF)** A Day 10 11 12 .... **D Burton (5)**
302 P201-3 **RED ANCHOR (IRE) (9) (CD)** Mrs L Jewell 11 10 13 .... **T Garner (3)**
303 1543-6 **BRUNETTE'SONLY (IRE) (9) (CD)** J W Mullins 10 10 12 . **A Thornton**
304 P44/4- **ROPARTA AVENUE (40)** Mrs D Grissell 8 10 11 ..... **L Aspell**
305 4035P- **YA HAFED (160)** Miss S West 7 10 9 ..... **M Goldstein**
306 50P52- **THE CAT'S AWAY (IRE) (34)** Mrs R Ford 7 10 2 ..... **R McLernon**
307 U6354- **WHAT'S FOR TEA (16)** P Butler 10 10 0 ..... **W Kavanagh (3)**

BETTING: 9-4 Charming Lad, 3-1 The Cat's Away, 7-2 Red Anchor, 7-1 Brunette'sonly, 8-1 Roparta Avenue, 10-1 Ya Hafed, 25-1 What's For Tea.

3.30 DOT HICKLING MEMORIAL HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS 5). £4,500 added 4YO PLUS 2m Penalty Value £2,924.

401 6P323- **WARRANT OFFICER (16) (BF)** Miss S West 5 11 12 . . **M Goldstein**
402 2/216- **DORRY K (IRE) (231) (D)(BF)** Jim Best 6 11 11 ..... **J Bargary (7)**
403 04230- **LOOKS LIKE MAGIC (28)** N King 6 11 9 ..... **T Whelan**
404 4004- **ZARAWI (IRE) (18)** C Longsdon 4 11 5 ..... **A Coleman**
405 6244F- **LINDSAY'S DREAM (16) (CD)** Miss Z Davison 9 11 5 ..... **M Grant**
406 F6505- **TIGER FEAT (34)** A King 5 11 4 ..... **W Hutchinson**
407 4P641- **HERMOSA VAQUERA (IRE) (16) (C)** Miss A N-Smith 5 11 4 **T Cannon**
408 0/P05- **LADY GERONIMO (IRE) (16)** C Allen 6 11 0 ..... **J Quinlan**
409 P35PU- **DUDE ALERT (IRE) (62)** G L Moore 5 10 7 ..... **N Scholfield**
410 035P2- **HAWK GOLD (IRE) (16) (CD)** Miss M Bryant 11 10 6 . **J Sherwood (5)**

BETTING: 3-1 Hermosa Vaquera, 9-2 Zarawi, 5-1 Dorry K, 6-1 Warrant Officer, 8-1 Tiger Feat, 12-1 Looks Like Magic, Hawk Gold, Dude Alert, 14-1 others.

4.00 SPEEDCUT CONTRACTORS RACING EXCELLENCE CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS' TRAINING SERIES FINAL HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS 3). £15,000 added 4YO PLUS 2m 5f Penalty Value £9,747.

501 40031- **ONE LUCKY LADY (20) (D)** N Henderson 7 11 12 ..... **F Mitchell (6)**
502 0/341- **BLUE BEAR (IRE) (62) (CD)** Mrs D Grissell 6 11 9 . . **Conor Smith (5)**
503 5P210- **OSSIE'S DANCER (15) (CD)** Martin Smith 6 11 8 . . **T Cheesman (3)**
504 2U231- **MERCERS COURT (IRE) (17) (D)** N King 7 11 7 ..... **A Johns (3)**
505 /2413- **MASTERFUL ACT (USA) (53) (D)(BF)** D Skelton 8 11 2 ..... **Bridget Andrews (3)**
506 /1F02- **LAUGHTON PARK (34) (CD)** Miss S Smith 10 10 13 **B Ffrench Davis (5)**
507 6/055- **GUARDS CHAPEL (23)** G L Moore 7 10 11 ..... **G Gorman (8)**
508 10345- **JAYO TIME (IRE) (15)** Dr R Newland 6 10 9 ..... **J Sherwood**
509 40033- **MORESTEAD SCREAMER (23)** C Gordon 6 10 5 . . **Paul O'Brien (3)**
510 0432P- **THE GAME IS A FOOT (IRE) (74) (C)** G L Moore 8 10 0 **J Nuttall (10)**

BETTING: 7-2 One Lucky Lady, 5-1 Blue Bear, Masterful Act, 6-1 Laughton Park, 13-2 Mercers Court, 10-1 Morestead Screamer, Ossie's Dancer, Jayo Time, 14-1 others.

4.30 ANISE CATERING HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS 4). £8,500 added 5YO PLUS 2m 4f Penalty Value £5,523.

601 42332- **VIKEKHAL (FR) (34) (C)** G L Moore 6 11 12 ..... **N Scholfield**
602 2P324/ **SPEEDY BRUERE (FR) (390) (D)** D Bridgwater 9 11 12 . . . **T Cannon**
603 2/PP1- **TIQUER (FR) (43) (D)** A Jones 7 11 8 ..... **B J Powell**
604 /445-U **MILLER OF GLANMIRE (IRE) (9)** C Mann 7 11 5 .... **T Dowling (10)**
605 01354- **VENETIAN LAD (30) (CD)** Mrs L Richards 10 11 5 ..... **M Goldstein**
606 462FP- **LILY LITTLE LEGS (IRE) (39) (BF)** I Williams 6 10 13 . **R McCarth (5)**

BETTING: 15-8 Tiquer, 9-4 Vikekhal, 6-1 Lily Little Legs, 8-1 Speedy Bruere, Miller Of Glanmire, Venetian Lad.

5.00 ANISE CATERING STANDARD OPEN NH FLAT RACE (CLASS 6). £2,500 added 4 to 6YO 2m 2f Penalty Value £1,624.

01 1 **ILEWIN GEEZ (9)** G L Moore 5 11 9 ..... **N Scholfield**
02 01/0- **MAIGH DARA (IRE) (190) (D)** Mrs L Richards 6 11 9 .... **M Goldstein**
03 0/324- **BALLINURE (IRE) (29)** N Henderson 5 11 2 ..... **J McGrath (3)**
04 U/3F3- **PILGRIMS BAY (IRE) (18)** D Pipe 5 11 2 ..... **Conor O'Farrell**
05 4- **PRINCE OSCAR (IRE) (39)** I Williams 6 11 2 ..... **R McCarth (5)**
06 0- **SECRET STING (IRE) (48)** N Gifford 5 11 2 ..... **L Aspell**
07 00/0- **TERRA FIRMA (50)** B Powell 5 11 2 ..... **R McLernon**
08 **LUNAR FLOW** J Snowden 4 10 12 ..... **B J Powell**
09 6- **SILVER TICKET (IRE) (39)** Mrs L Mongan 4 10 12 ..... **A Coleman**
10 53- **WELLUPTOSCRATCH (FR) (23)** D Arbuthnot 4 10 12 ..... **T Cannon**
11 0- **BETSY BOO BOO (60)** M Roberts 6 10 9 ..... **F Mitchell (7)**
12 62- **THE GOLDEN HOUR (IRE) (77)** Miss Z Davison 5 10 9 ..... **M Grant**

BETTING: 11-4 Pilgrims Bay, 7-2 Ballinure, 4-1 Welluptoscratch, 8-1 Prince Oscar, Ilewin Geez, 10-1 Lunar Flow, 14-1 Maigh Dara, 20-1 Silver Ticket, 25-1 others.

Non-league Football

CUP WINNERS: Baffin Milton Rovers with the trophy. *Pictures: d.yarney@ntlworld.com*

ROVERS WIN AS HAMBLE MISS OUT ON DOUBLE

HAMBLE CLUB missed out on adding the Hampshire Intermediate Cup to their league title after losing last night's final to Baffin Milton Rovers.

The Hampshire Premier League champions were beaten 3-2 on a wet night at AFC Totton's Testwood Stadium.

A goal in each half from Rovers' number nine Chaz Gardner ensured the league runners-up triumphed in the cup final.

Gardner gave Rovers the lead midway through the first half with a clinical finish into the far corner, ***writes SIMON WALTER***

He was behind most of Rovers' best moments during a dominant first half but was denied by Ben Kneller's point-blank save

Midfielder Blu Boam also impressed but another brave Kneller save at the beginning of the second half kept Hamble in the game.

Luke Watts struck the goal of the night to equalise. The Hamble number seven fired a 25- yard screamer into the top of the far corner

Within a few minutes, Hamble winger Liam Crook thought he had given his side the lead only for it to be flagged offside.

The diminutive Crook sent another shot skidding across the wet turf but straight at goalkeeper Tony Male before Rovers struck two goals in five minutes to go 3-1 up.

Shane Cornish restored Rovers' lead with the aid of a deflection. And after Boam's pass sent him clear, Gardner scored his second of the night, a clinical finish into the bottom corner to complete a rapid 80th-minute counter attack.

Sixty seconds later, Hamble pulled a goal back from the penalty spot, former Totton star Danny Cox sending Male the wrong way after Tyler Moret had handled.

Cox soon had the chance to take the game to a penalty shoot-out but the last kick of the match, a direct free kick, was deflected over the bar.

Hamble Club: Ben Kneller, Craig Shrimpton, Bobby Lamb, Kevin Lewis (Prince McLean), Andrew Milton, Danny Cox, Luke Watts, Gary Fulker (Ricki Sibley), Shane Flooks, Ricky Bull, Liam Crook. Subs not used: Joe Bell, Dean Curnow.

Baffins Milton Rovers: Tony Male, Sam Willet, Ollie Watts (Tyler Moret), Mike Mallory, Tyler Yates, Danny Rimmer, Shane Cornish, Blu Boam, Chaz Gardner, Dean Harris, Jamie White. Subs not used: Ryan White, Morgan Moret, Liam Bush.

CUP OF JOY: Nursling players celebrate their 2-0 (Joe Walsh, Martin McNeil) success over Bishopstoke in the final of the Drew Smith League Supplementary Cup.

CUP KINGS – BRAISHFIELD: Shocked Drew Smith League Premier Division champions BTC Southampton with a penalty shoot-out victory in the Southampton Senior League Cup final.

DOUBLE DELIGHT: Drew Smith Women's Division and Play-off Cup final winners Fleetlands with their trophies.

KINGPINS: Redlynch & Woodfalls United with Drew Smith League O40 Veterans Cup.

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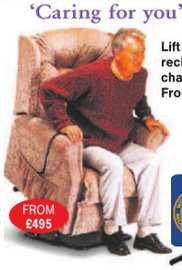
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IPS

Non-league Football

Hythe & Dibden announce Wheatcroft as new boss

HYTHE & Dibden FC have announced that former Portsmouth and Southampton striker Gary Wheatcroft will be their new manager for the upcoming season.

Wheatcroft, who has also played professional Football for HFC Haarlem in Holland, will take over immediately following Lee Burch's departure to AFC Totton in April, *writes ALEX BARNES*.

He will be joined by Scott Johnston as assistant manager, with Aaron Fry joining the coaching staff following his very successful season as boss of the reserves.

Wheatcroft has managed successfully with Bosham FC and Selsey FC where he won the Sussex County Division Two with both teams. He also steered Selsey to League Cup victory.

He has coached in the USA, including the Issaquah Soccer Club in Seattle, and was the director of coaching at the Football Academy with ex-England and Chelsea players Peter Osgood, Ron Harris, Alan Harris and Graham Paddon.

TAKING THE HELM: Gary Wheatcroft.

Following his appointment, Wheatcroft said: "I normally manage in Sussex. It all appealed to me as a nice stepping stone with the new club and facilities.

"The club is full of nice people and I must have won them over."

Wheatcroft admitted that the appointment at Hythe & Dibden, who are in the Sydenhams Wessex Division One, was a step down from his usual positions, but the appeal of helping to build up a club was something he liked.

"I'm glad they've picked me to take them forward," Wheatcroft explained. "The new facilities and new ground will be a nice start to a new era.

"I feel that the committee have worked very hard and have laid the seeds for the club to develop." He continued. "Now it's time for me to produce and help them improve further."

Wheatcroft said he hopes to bring some stability to the club after they struggled with pitch problems and regular playing time last season.

He has already started working alongside assistant manager Johnston and will meet all the players next month.

"He's (Johnston) a lovely lad and I feel like I've known him years already," Wheatcroft admitted. "It's great to have him here with me. I also think it's good being an outsider coming in. It gives everyone a fair chance to impress me and get into the team.

"I really hope that last year's players stay on board and give me a chance to show them what I can do."

He concluded: "If I can get things going well early on, it should be a good season."

NEW ARRIVALS GET JOHNSTON BUZZING

HYTHE & Dibden secretary/assistant manager Scott Johnston has two significant new arrivals in his life.

As well as becoming dad to a bouncing baby boy, Charlie, he will be working with a new boss at Clayfields following the appointment of Gary Wheatcroft as successor to Lee Burch.

At 55, Wheatcroft comes from a different generation to his 29-year-old predecessor Burch, who recently left the Watersiders to become head coach of AFC Totton.

Inevitably their approaches are very different and Johnston looks forward to learning another style of management under former striker Wheatcroft, who includes stays at Portsmouth, Saints and Dutch side HFC Haarlem on his playing CV along with coaching experience in the USA.

Management-wise, Hythe's new boss has spent the bulk of his time working closer to his Southsea home, winning trophies with Sussex County League outfits Bosham and Selsey.

Wendy Gee
wendy.gee@dailyecho.co.uk
NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

Johnston, who remains good friends with Burch, said: "Gary is very different to Lee. He's got a more old-fashioned, hands-on approach and is more of a manager than a coach.

"I'm not saying Lee wasn't a manager, but he's got different ideas.

"It was always going to be hard to find a successor to Lee who could keep the club on the right track and push us forward, but I've got a good feeling about Gary. All he wants to do is win.

"Gary is a really nice guy and he knows his stuff.

"I get on well with him and that was quite important for our committee because they wanted me to stay involved as assistant manager.

"Even though Gary was outstanding in the interview, the club gave me the final say. They asked me if I was going to get on with him and, after one phone call and one meeting, I knew I would."

Johnston, 25, will operate as Wheatcroft's right-hand man along with 26-year-old Aaron Fry, who is stepping up from last season's successful reserve team.

"Gary's not bringing any players with him, we want to keep the squad together and add to it as carefully as we can," Johnston explained.

"Gary knows a lot of pros in the game, but what I bring is knowing the club and having a player pool in this area. It's the same with Aaron Fry.

"Aaron and I are a similar age and Gary is 55 with over 30 years' experience behind him. There's good variety there.

"I think it's the first time Hythe have had an 'outsider' as manager, but the travelling's no problem for him, it's taken him about 30 minutes so far. He's very organised and very punctual and, being self-employed, work is not an issue for him.

"The club's in a positive place now. The facilities have impressed Gary and the base is there for a new era."

Johnson is looking forward to knuckling down to work with the Sydenhams One outfit.

"I really hope last year's players stay on board and give me a chance to show them what I can do," he said. "If I can get things going well early on, it should be a good season.

"It's good being an outsider coming in. It gives everyone a fair chance to impress me and get into the team."

Announcing Wheatcroft's arrival, an H&D statement said: "The club has taken its time in reaching the decision and we are confident that Gary is the right candidate to take the club forward.

"We've secured the services of a highly-rated, experienced candidate for the job and Gary is a manager who has enjoyed plenty of success at a higher level.

"We were all very impressed with Gary during the interview process and it speaks volumes that the club are able to attract a manager of Gary's calibre.

"Scott Johnston will work alongside Gary as his assistant. It was important to us that whoever got the job worked with him and he remained heavily involved in first-team affairs."

Football results

BARCLAYS PREMIER LEAGUE

Aston Villa 1 West Ham 0
Crystal Palace L Man Utd L
Everton 0 Sunderland 2
Hull 0 Burnley 1
Leicester 2 Southampton 0
Newcastle 1 West Brom 1
Stoke 3 Tottenham Hotspur 0

Barclays Premier League

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	35	25	8	2	69	27	83
Man City	35	21	7	7	71	36	70
Arsenal	34	21	7	6	66	33	70
Man Utd	35	19	8	8	59	35	65
Liverpool	35	18	7	10	49	38	61
Tottenham	36	17	7	12	55	53	58
SAINTS	36	17	6	13	48	30	57
Swansea	35	15	8	12	43	44	53
Stoke	36	14	8	14	42	44	50
West Ham	36	12	11	13	43	43	47
Everton	36	11	11	14	46	48	44
Crystal Palace	35	11	9	15	42	48	42
West Brom	36	10	11	15	34	47	41
Aston Villa	36	10	8	18	30	50	38
Leicester	36	10	7	19	41	54	37
Sunderland	35	7	15	13	30	50	36
Newcastle	36	9	9	18	37	61	36
Hull	36	8	10	18	33	49	34
Burnley	36	6	11	19	27	53	29
QPR	35	7	6	22	39	61	27

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Ipswich 1 Norwich 1

SKY BET LEAGUE 2
Play-Offs Semi-Final First Leg
Plymouth L Wycombe L

VANARAMA PLAY-OFFS
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Chorley 2 Guiseley 3
South Final
Boreham Wood L Whitehawk L

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